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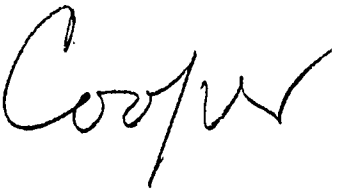

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THE LAST

OF

THE MOHICANS;

A

NARRATIVE OF 1757.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE SPY," "THE PILOT,
"THE PIONEERS," &c. &c.

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" Mislike me not, for my complexion,
The shadowed livery of the burnished sun."

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IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE

LAST OF THE MOHICANS.

CHAPTER I.

—" But though the beast of game
The privilege of chase may claim;
Though space and law the stag we lend,
Ere hound we slip, or bow we bend;
Whoever recked, where, how, or when,
The prowling fox was trapped or slain.'—*Lady of the Lake.*

It is unusual to find an encampment of the natives, like those of the more instructed whites, guarded by the presence of armed men. Well informed of the approach of every danger, while it is yet at a distance, the Indian generally rests secure under his knowledge of the signs of the forest, and the long and difficult paths that separate

him from those he has most reason to dread. But the enemy who, by any lucky concurrence of accidents, has found means to elude the vigilance of the scouts, will seldom meet with sentinels nearer home to sound the alarm. In addition to this general usage, the tribes friendly to the French king knew too well the weight of the blow that had just been struck, to apprehend any immediate danger from the hostile nations that were tributary to the crown of Britain.

When Duncan and David, therefore found themselves in the centre of the busy children, who played the antics already mentioned, it was without the least previous intimation of their approach. But so soon as they were observed, the whole of the juvenile pack raised, by common consent, a single shrill and warning whoop; and then sunk, as it were by magic, from before the sight of their visiters. The naked, tawny bodies of the crouching urchins, blended so nicely, at that hour, with the withered herbage, that at first it seemed as if the earth had, in truth swal-

lowed up their forms; though, when surprise had permitted Duncan to bend his own wondering looks more curiously about the spot, he found them every where met by dark, quick, and rolling eye-balls.

Gathering no encouragement from this startling presage, of the nature of the scrutiny he was likely to undergo from the more mature judgments of the men, there was an instant when the young soldier would gladly have retreated. It was, however, too late to appear even to hesitate. The cry of the children had drawn a dozen warriors to the door of the nearest lodge, where they stood, clustered in a dark and savage groupe, gravely awaiting the nearer approach of those who had thus unexpectedly come among them.

David, in some measure familiarized to the scene, led the way, with a steadiness that no slight obstacle was likely to disconcert, into this very building. It was the principal edifice of the village, though roughly constructed of the bark and branches of trees; being the lodge in which the tribe held its councils and public meetings, during

their temporary residence on the borders of the English province. Duncan found it difficult to assume the necessary appearance of unconcern, as he brushed the dark and powerful frames of the savages who thronged its threshold; but, conscious that his existence depended on his presence of mind, he trusted to the discretion of his companion, whose footsteps he closely followed, endeavouring as he proceeded, to rally his thoughts for the occasion. His blood had stagnated for a moment, when he found himself in absolute contact with such fierce and implacable enemies; but he so far mastered his feelings, as to pursue his way into the centre of the lodge, with an exterior that did not betray the weakness. Imitating the example of the deliberate Gamut, he drew a bundle of fragrant brush from beneath a pile, that filled a corner of the hut, and seated himself in silence.

So soon as their visiter had passed, the observant warriors fell back from the entrance, and arranging themselves about him, they seemed patiently to await the moment when it might comport with the

dignity of the stranger to speak. By far the greater number stood leaning, in lazy, lounging attitudes, against the upright posts that supported the crazy building, while three or four of the oldest and most distinguished of the chiefs placed themselves, in their ordinary manner, on the earth, a little more in advance.

A flaring torch was burning in the place, and sent its red glare from face to face, and figure to figure, as it wavered, inconstantly, in the currents of air. Duncan profited by its light, to read, with jealous looks, the probable character of his reception, in the countenances of his hosts. But his ingenuity availed him little, against the cold artifices of the people he had encountered. The chiefs in front scarce cast a glance at his person, keeping their eyes fastened on the ground, with an air that might have been intended for respect, but which it was quite easy to construe into distrust. The men, in shadow, were less reserved. Duncan soon detected their searching, but stolen looks, which, in truth, scanned his person and attire inch by inch; leaving no emotion

of the countenance; no gesture, no line of the paint, nor even the fashion of a garment, unheeded, and without its secret comment.

At length, one whose hair was beginning to be sprinkled with gray, but whose sinewy limbs and firm tread announced that he was still equal to the arduous duties of manhood, advanced from out the gloom of a corner, whither he had probably posted himself to make his observations unseen, and spoke. He used the language of the Wyandots, or Hurons: his words were, consequently, unintelligible to Heyward, though they seemed, by the gestures that accompanied them, to be uttered more in courtesy than anger. The latter shook his head, and made a gesture indicative of his inability to reply.

"Do none of my brothers speak the French or the English?" he said, in the former language, looking about him, from countenance to countenance, in hopes of finding a nod of assent.

Though more than one head turned, as if to catch the meaning of his words, they remained unanswered.

"I should be grieved to think," continued Duncan, speaking slowly, and using the simplest French of which he was the master, "to believe that none of this wise and brave nation understand the language that the 'Grand Monarque' uses, when he talks to his children. His heart would be heavy, did he believe his red warriors paid him so little respect!"

A long and grave pause succeeded, during which no movement of a limb, nor any expression of an eye, betrayed the impression produced by his remark. Duncan, who knew that silence was a virtue amongst his hosts, gladly had recourse to the custom, in order to arrange his ideas. At length, the same warrior, who had before addressed him, replied, by dryly demanding, in the slight patois of the Canadas—

"When our Great Father speaks to his people, is it with the tongue of a Huron?"

"He knows no difference in his children, whether the colour of the skin be red, or black, or white," returned Duncan, evasively; "though chiefly is he satisfied with the brave Hurons."

"In what manner will he speak," demanded the wary chief, "when the runners count, to him, the scalps which five nights ago grew on the heads of the Yengeese?"

"They were his enemies," said Duncan, shuddering involuntarily; "and, doubtless, he will say it is good—my Hurons are very valiant."

"Our Canada father does not think it. Instead of looking forward to reward his Indians, his eyes are turned backward. He sees the dead Yengeese, but no Huron. What can this mean?"

"A great chief, like him, has more thoughts than tongues. He looks to see that no enemies are on his trail."

"The canoe of a dead warrior will not float on the Horican," returned the savage, gloomily. "His ears are open to the Delawares, who are not our friends, and they fill them with lies."

"It cannot be. See; he has bid me, who am a man that knows the art of healing; to go to his children, the red Hurons of the Great Lakes, and ask if any are sick!"

Another long and deep silence succeeded this annunciation of the character Duncan had assumed. Every eye was simultaneously bent on his person, as if to enquire into the truth or falsehood of the declaration, with an intelligence and keenness, that caused the subject of their scrutiny to tremble for the result. He was, however, relieved again, by the former speaker.

"Do the cunning men of the Canadas paint their skins," the Huron, coldly, continued; "we have heard them boast that their faces were pale?"

"When an Indian chief comes among his white fathers," returned Duncan, with great steadiness, "he lays aside his buffalo robe, to carry the shirt that is offered him. My brothers have given me paint, and I wear it."

A low murmur of applause announced that the compliment to the tribe was favourably received. The elderly chief made a gesture of commendation, which was answered by most of his companions, who each threw forth a hand, and uttered the usual brief exclamation of pleasure. Dun-

can began to breathe more freely, believing that the weight of his examination was past; and as he had already prepared a simple and probable tale to support his pretended occupation, his hopes of ultimate success grew brighter.

After a silence of a few moments, as if adjusting his thoughts, in order to make a suitable answer to the declaration their guest had just given, another warrior arose, and placed himself in an attitude to speak. While his lips were yet in the act of parting, a low, but fearful sound, arose from the forest, and was immediately succeeded by a high, shrill yell, that was drawn out, until it equalled the longest and most plaintive howl of the wolf. The sudden and terrible interruption caused Duncan to start from his seat, unconscious of everything, but the effect produced by so frightful a cry. At the same moment, the warriors glided in a body from the lodge, and the outer air was filled with loud shouts, that nearly drowned those awful sounds, which the organs of Duncan occasionally announced, were still ringing beneath the arches of the woods.

Unable to command himself any longer, the youth broke from the place, and presently stood in the centre of a disorderly throng, that included nearly everything having life, within the limits of the encampment. Men, women, and children; the aged, the infirm, the active, and the strong, were alike abroad; some exclaiming aloud, others clapping their hands with a joy that seemed frantic, and all expressing their savage pleasure in some unexpected event. Though astounded, at first, by the uproar, Heyward was soon enabled to find its solution by the scene that followed.

There yet lingered sufficient light in the heavens, to exhibit those bright openings among the tree-tops, where different paths left the clearing to enter the depths of the wilderness. Beneath one of them, a line of warriors issued from the woods, and advanced slowly toward the dwellings. One in front bore a short pole, on which, as it afterwards appeared, were suspended several human scalps. The startling sounds that Duncan had heard, were what the whites have, not inappropriately, called the "death

halloo;" and each repetition of the cry was intended to announce to the tribe, the fate of an enemy. Thus far the knowledge of Heyward assisted him in the explanation; and as he now knew that the interruption was caused by the unlooked-for return of a successful war-party, every disagreeable sensation was quieted in inward congratulations, for the opportune relief and insignificance it conferred on himself.

When at the distance of a few hundred feet from the lodges, the newly arrived warriors halted. Their plaintive and terrific cry, which was intended to represent, equally, the wailings of the dead and the triumph of the victors, had entirely ceased. One of their number now called aloud, in words that were far from appalling, though not more intelligible to those for whose ears they were intended, than their expressive yells. It would be difficult to convey a suitable idea of the savage ecstacy with which the news, thus imparted, was received. The whole encampment, in a moment, became a scene of the most violent bustle and commotion. The warriors drew their

knives, and flourishing them on high, they arranged themselves in two lines, forming a lane, that extended from the war-party to the lodges. The squaws seized clubs, axes, or whatever weapon of offence first offered itself to their hands, and rushed eagerly to act their part in the cruel game that was at hand. Even the children would not be excluded; but boys, little able to wield the instruments, tore the tomahawks from the belts of their fathers, and stole into the ranks, apt imitators of the savage traits exhibited by their parents.

Large piles of brush lay scattered about the clearing, and a wary and aged squaw was occupied in firing as many as might serve to light the coming exhibition. As the flame arose, its power exceeded that of the parting day, and assisted to render objects, at the same time, more distinct and more hideous. The whole scene formed a striking picture, whose frame was composed by the dark and tall border of pines. The warriors just arrived were the most distant figures. A little in advance, stood two men, who were apparently selected from the rest, as the

principal actors in what was to follow. The light was not strong enough to render their features distinct, though it was quite evident that they were governed by very different emotions. While one stood erect and firm, prepared to meet his fate like a hero, the other bowed his head as if palsied by terror, or stricken with shame. The high spirited Duncan felt a powerful impulse of admiration and pity towards the former, though no opportunity could offer to exhibit his generous emotions. He watched his slightest movement, however, with eager eyes; and as he traced the fine outline of his admirably proportioned and active frame, he endeavoured to persuade himself, that if the powers of man, seconded by such noble resolution, could bear one harmless through so severe a trial, the youthful captive before him might hope for success in the hazardous race he was about to run. Insensibly, the young man drew nigher to the swarthy lines of the Hurons, and scarcely breathed, so intense became his interest in the spectacle. Just then the signal yell was given, and the

momentary quiet which had preceded it was broken by a burst of cries, that far exceeded any before heard. The most abject of the two victims continued motionless; but the other bounded from the place, at the cry, with the activity and swiftness of a deer. Instead of rushing through the hostile lines, as had been expected, he just entered the dangerous defile, and before time was given for a single blow, turned short, and leaping the heads of a row of children, he gained at once the exterior and safer side of the formidable array. The artifice was answered by a hundred voices raised in imprecations, and the whole of the excited multitude broke from their order, and spread themselves about the place in wild confusion.

A dozen blazing piles now shed their lurid brightness on the place, which resembled some unhallowed and supernatural arena, in which malicious demons had assembled to act their bloody and lawless rights. Those forms in the back ground looked like unearthly beings, gliding before the eye, and cleaving the air with frantic

and unmeaning gestures; while the savage passions of such as passed the flames, were rendered fearfully distinct, by the gleams that shot athwart their dusky but inflamed visages.

It will easily be understood, that amid such a concourse of vindictive enemies, no breathing time was permitted to the fugitive. There was a single moment, when it seemed as if he would have reached the forest, but the whole body of his captors threw themselves before him, and drove him back into the centre of his relentless persecutors. Turning like a headed deer, he shot, with the swiftness of an arrow, through a pillar of forked flame, and passing the whole multitude harmless, he appeared on the opposite side of the clearing. Here, too, he was met and turned by a few of the older and more subtle of the Hurons. Once more he tried the throng, as if seeking safety in its blindness, and then several moments succeeded, during which Duncan believed the active and courageous young stranger was irretrievably lost.

Nothing could be distinguished but a

dark mass of human forms, tossed and involved in inexplicable confusion. Arms, gleaming knives, and formidable clubs, appeared above them, but the blows were evidently given at random. The awful effect was heightened by the piercing shrieks of the women, and the fierce yells of the warriors. Now and then, Duncan caught a glimpse of a light form cleaving the air in some desperate bound; and he rather hoped than believed, that the captive yet retained the command of his astonishing powers of activity. Suddenly, the multitude rolled backward, and approached the spot where he himself stood. The heavy body in the rear pressed upon the women and children in front, and bore them to the earth. The stranger re-appeared in the confusion. Human power could not, however, much longer endure so severe a trial. Of this the captive seemed conscious. Profiting by the momentary opening, he darted from among the warriors, and made a desperate, and what seemed to Duncan, a final effort to gain the wood. As if aware that no

danger was to be apprehended from the young soldier, the fugitive nearly brushed his person in his flight. A tall and powerful Huron, who had husbanded his forces, pressed close upon his heels, and with an uplifted arm, menaced a fatal blow. Duncan thrust forth a foot, and the shock precipitated the eager savage headlong, many feet in advance of his intended victim. Thought itself is not quicker than was the motion with which the latter profited by the advantage; he turned, gleamed like a meteor again before the eyes of Duncan, and at the next moment, when the latter recovered his recollection, and gazed around in quest of the captive, he saw him quietly leaning against a small painted post, which stood before the door of the principal lodge.

Apprehensive that the part he had taken in the escape might prove fatal to himself, Duncan left the place without delay. He followed the crowd, which drew nigh the lodges, gloomy and sullen, like any other multitude that had been disappointed in an execution. Curiosity, or, perhaps, a

better feeling, induced him to approach the stranger. He found him, standing with one arm cast about the protecting post, and breathing thick and hard, after his incredible exertions, but still disdaining to permit a single sign of suffering to escape. His person was now protected, by immemorial and sacred usage, until the tribe in council had deliberated and determined on his fate. It was not difficult, however, to foretel the result, if any presage could be drawn from the feelings of those who crowded the place.

There was no term of abuse known to the Huron vocabulary, that the disappointed women did not lavishly expend on the successful stranger. They flouted at his efforts, and told him, with many and bitter scoffs, that his feet were better than his hands, and that he merited wings, while he knew not the use of an arrow or a knife. To all this the captive made no reply, but was content to preserve an attitude, in which dignity was singularly blended with disdain. Exasperated as much by his composure as by his good for-

tune, their words became unintelligible, and were succeeded by shrill, piercing yells. Just then, the crafty squaw, who had taken the necessary precaution to fire the piles, made her way through the throng, and cleared a place for herself in front of the captive. The squalid and withered person of this hag, might well have obtained for her the character of possessing more than human cunning. Throwing back her light vestment, she stretched forth her long, skinny arm in derision, and using the language of the Lenape, as more intelligible to the subject of her jibes, she commenced aloud.

"Look you, Delaware!" she said, snapping her fingers in his face; "your nation is a race of women, and the hoe is better fitted to your hands than the gun! Your squaws are the mothers of deer; but if a bear, or a wild cat, or a serpent, were born among you, ye would flee! The Huron girls shall make you petticoats, and we will find you a husband."

A loud burst of savage and taunting laughter succeeded this attack, during

which the soft and musical merriment of the younger females, strangely chimed with the cracked voice of their older and more malignant companion. But the stranger was superior to all their efforts. His head was immovable; nor did he betray the slightest consciousness that any were present, except when his haughty eye rolled proudly towards the dusky forms of the warriors, who stalked in the back ground, silent and sullen observers of the scene.

Infuriated at the self-command of the captive, the woman placed her arms akimbo, and throwing herself into a posture of defiance, she broke out anew, in a torrent of words, that no art of ours could commit successfully to paper. Her breath was, however, expended in vain; for, although distinguished in her nation as a proficient in the art of abuse, she was permitted to work herself into such a fury, as actually to foam at the mouth, without causing a muscle to vibrate in the motionless figure of the stranger. The effect of his indifference began to extend itself to the other

spectators; and a youngster who was just quitting the condition of a boy, to enter the state of manhood, attempted to assit the termagant, by flourishing his tomahawk before their victim, and adding his empty boasts to the taunts of the woman. Then, indeed, the captive turned his face towards the light, and looked down on the stripling with a loftiness of expression, that was even superior to contempt. At the next moment, he resumed his quiet and reclining attitude against the post. But the action and the change of posture had permitted Duncan to exchange glances with the firm and piercing eyes of Uncas.

Breathless with amazement, and heavily oppressed with the critical situation of his friend, Heyward recoiled before the look, trembling lest its meaning expression might, in some unknown manner, hasten the prisoner's fate. There was not, however, any instant cause for such an apprehension. Just then a warrior forced his way into the exasperated crowd. Motioning the women and children aside with a stern gesture, he took Uncas by the arm, and led him towards

the door of the council lodge. Thither all the chiefs, and most of the distinguished warriors, followed, among whom the anxious Heyward found means to enter, without attracting any dangerous attention to himself.

A few minutes were consumed in disposing of those present in a manner suitable to their rank and influence in the tribe. An order very similar to that adopted in the preceding interview was observed; the aged and superior chief occupying the area of the spacious apartment, within the powerful light of a glaring torch, while their juniors and inferiors were arranged in the back ground, presenting a dark outline to the picture, of swarthy and sternly marked visages. In the very centre of the lodge, immediately under an opening that admitted the twinkling light of one or two stars, stood Uncas, calm, elevated, and collected. His high and haughty carriage was not lost on his captors, who often bent their looks on his person, with eyes, which while they lost none of their inflexibility of purpose,

plainly betrayed their admiration of the stranger's daring.

The case was different with the individual, whom Duncan had observed to stand forth with his friend, previous to the desperate trial of speed; and who, instead of joining in the chase, had remained, throughout all its turbulent uproar, like a cringing statue, expressive of shame and disgrace. Though not a hand had been extended to greet him, nor yet an eye had condescended to watch his movements, he had also entered the lodge, as though impelled by a fate, to whose decrees he submitted, seemingly, without a struggle. Heyward profited by the first opportunity to gaze in his face, secretly apprehensive he might find the features of another acquaintance, but they proved to be those of a stranger, and what was still more inexplicable, of one who bore all the distinctive marks of a Huron warrior. Instead of mingling with his tribe, however, he sat apart, a solitary being in a multitude, his form shrinking into a crouching and abject attitude, as if anxious to fill

as little space as possible. When each individual had taken his proper station, and a breathing silence reigned in the place, the gray-haired chief, already introduced to the reader, spoke aloud, in the language of the Lenni Lenape.

"Delaware," he said, "though one of a nation of women, you have proved yourself a man. I would give you food, but he who eats with a Huron, should become his friend. Rest in peace till the morning sun, when our words shall be spoken to you."

"Seven nights, and as many summer days, have I fasted on the trail of the Hurons," Uncas coldly replied; "the children of the Lenape know how to travel the path of the just, without lingering to eat."

"Two of my young men are in pursuit of your companion," resumed the other, without appearing to regard the boast of his captive; "when they get back, then will our wise men say to you—live or die."

"Has a Huron no ears?" scornfully exclaimed Uncas; "twice since he has been your prisoner, has the Delaware heard a

gun that he knows! Your young men will never come back."

A short and sullen pause succeeded this confident assertion. Duncan, who understood the Mohican to allude to the fatal rifle of the scout, bent forward in earnest observation of the effect it might produce on the conquerors; but the chief was content with simply retorting—

"If the Lenape are so skilful, why is one of their bravest warriors here?"

"He followed in the steps of a flying coward, and fell into a snare. The cunning beaver may be caught!"

As Uncas thus replied, he pointed with his finger towards the solitary Huron, but without deigning to bestow any other notice on so unworthy an object. The words of the answer, and the air of the speaker, produced a powerful sensation among his auditors. Every eye rolled sullenly toward the individual indicated by the simple gesture, and a low, threatening murmur passed through the crowd. The ominous sounds reached the outer door, and the women and children pressing into

the throng, no gap had been left, between shoulder and shoulder, that was not, now, filled with the dark lineaments of some eager and curious human countenance.

In the meantime, the more aged chiefs, in the centre, communed with each other in short and broken sentences. Not a word was uttered, that did not convey the meaning of the speaker, in the simplest and most energetic form. Again, a long and deeply solemn pause took place. It was known, by all present, to be the grave precursor of a weighty and important judgment. They who composed the outer circle of faces were on tiptoe to gaze, and even the culprit, for an instant, forgot his shame in a deeper emotion, and exposed his abject features, in order to cast an anxious and troubled glance at the dark assemblage of chiefs. The deep and impressive silence was finally broken by the aged warrior so often named. He arose from the earth, and moving past the immovable form of Uncas, placed himself in a dignified and erect attitude before the offender. At that moment, the withered

squaw already mentioned, moved into the circle, in a slow, sideling sort of a dance, holding the torch, and muttering the indistinct words of what might have been a species of incantation. Though her presence was altogether an intrusion, it was unheeded.

Approaching Uncas, she held the blazing brand in such a manner as to cast its red glare on his person, and expose the slightest emotion of his countenance. The Mohican chief maintained his firm and haughty attitude; and his eye, so far from deigning to meet her inquisitive look, dwelt steadily on the distance, as though it penetrated the obstacles which impeded the view, and looked deep into futurity. Satisfied with her examination, she left him, with a slight expression of pleasure, and proceeded to practise the same trying experiment on her delinquent countryman.

The young Huron was in his war paint, and very little of a finely moulded form was concealed by his attire. The light rendered every limb and joint discernible, and Duncan turned away in horror, when

he saw they were writhing in irrepressible agony. The woman was commencing a low and plaintive howl at the sad and shameful spectacle, when the chief put forth his hand and gently pushed her aside.

"Reed-that-bends," he said, addressing the young culprit by name, and in his proper language, "though the Great Spirit has made you pleasant to the eyes, it would have been better that you had not been born. Your tongue is loud in the village, but in battle it is still. None of my young men strike the tomahawk deeper into the war-post—none of them so lightly on the Yengeese. The enemy know the shape of your back, but they have never seen the colour of your eyes. Three times have they called on you to come, and as often did you forget to answer. Your name will never be mentioned again in your tribe—it is already forgotten."

As the chief slowly uttered these words, pausing impressively between each sentence, the culprit raised his face, in deference to the other's rank and years.

Shame, horror, and pride, struggled fearfully in its speaking lineaments. His eye, which was contracted with inward anguish, gleamed around on the persons of those whose breath was his fame, and the latter emotion, for an instant, predominated. He arose to his feet, and baring his bosom, looked steadily on the keen, glittering knife, that was already upheld by his inexorable judge. As the weapon passed slowly into his heart, he even smiled, as if in joy, at having found death less dreadful than he had anticipated, and fell heavily on his face, at the feet of the rigid and unyielding form of Uncas.

The squaw gave a loud and plaintive yell, dashed the torch to the earth, and buried everything in darkness. The whole shuddering group of spectators glided from the lodge like troubled sprites; and Duncan thought that he and the yet throbbing body of the victim of an Indian judgment had now become its only tenants.

CHAPTER II.

"Thus spoke the sage; the kings without delay
Dissolve the council, and their chief obey."—*Pope's Iliad.*

A SINGLE moment, however, served to convince the youth that he was mistaken. A hand was laid, with a powerful pressure, on his arm, and then the low voice of Uncas muttered in his ears—

"The Hurons are dogs! The sight of a coward's blood can never make a warrior tremble. The 'grey head' and the Sagamore are safe, and the rifle of Hawk-eye is not asleep. Go—Uncas and the 'open hand' are now strangers. It is enough."

Heyward would gladly have heard more, but a timely effort from his friend, urged him toward the door, and admonished him of the danger that might attend the discovery

of their intercourse. Slowly and reluctantly yielding to the necessity, he quitted the place, and mingled with the throng that hovered nigh. The dying fires in the clearing, cast a dim and uncertain light on the dusky figures that were silently stalking to and fro; and, occasionally, a brighter gleam than common glanced into the darkness of the lodge, and exhibited the figure of Uncas, still maintaining its upright attitude above the dead body of the Huron.

A knot of warriors soon entered the place again, and re-issuing, they bore the senseless remains into the adjacent woods. After this solemn termination of the scene, Duncan wandered among the lodges, unquestioned and unnoticed, endeavouring to find some trace of her, in whose behalf he incurred the risk he ran. In the present temper of the tribe, it would have been easy to have fled and rejoined his companions, had such a wish crossed his mind. But in addition to the never-ceasing anxiety on account of Alice, a fresher though feebler, interest in the fate of Uncas, assisted to chain him to the spot. He

continued, therefore, to stray from hut to hut, looking into each only to encounter additional disappointments, until he had made the entire circuit of the village. Abandoning a species of enquiry that proved so fruitless, he retraced his steps to the council lodge, resolved to seek and question David, in order to put an end to doubts that were becoming painful.

On reaching the building, which had proved alike the seat of judgment and the place of execution, the young man found that the excitement had already subsided. The warriors had re-assembled, and were now calmly smoking, while they conversed gravely on the chief incidents of their recent expedition to the head of the Horican. Though the return of Duncan was likely to remind them of his character, and the suspicious circumstances of his visit, it produced no visible sensation. So far, the terrible scene that had just occurred, proved favourable to his views, and he required no other prompter than his own feelings to convince him of the expediency

of profiting by so unexpected an advantage.

Without seeming to hesitate, he walked into the lodge, and took his seat with a gravity that accorded admirably with the deportment of his hosts. A hasty but searching glance, sufficed to tell him, that though Uncas still remained where he had left him, David had not re-appeared. No other restraint was imposed on the former than the watchful looks of a young Huron, who had placed himself at hand; though an armed warrior leaned against the post that formed one side of the narrow doorway. In every other respect, the captive seemed at liberty; still, he was excluded from all participation in the discourse, and possessed much more of the air of some finely moulded statue, than of a man having life and volition.

Heyward had, too recently, witnessed a frightful instance of the prompt punishments of the people, into whose hands he had fallen, to hazard an exposure by any officious boldness. He would greatly have

preferred silence and meditation to speech, when a discovery of his real condition might prove so instantly fatal. Unfortunately for this prudent resolution, his entertainers appeared otherwise disposed. He had not long occupied the seat he had wisely taken, a little in the shade, when another of the elder warriors, who spoke the French language, addressed him—

"My Canada father does not forget his children!" said the chief; "I thank him. An evil spirit lives in the wife of one of my young men. Can the cunning stranger frighten him away?"

Heyward possessed some knowledge of the mummery practised among the Indians, in the cases of such supposed visitations. He saw, at a glance, that the circumstance might possibly be improved to further his own ends. It would, therefore, have been difficult, just then, to have uttered a proposal that would have given him more satisfaction. Aware of the necessity of preserving the dignity of his imaginary character, however, he repressed his feelings, and answered with suitable mystery—

"Spirits differ; some yield to the power of wisdom, while others are too strong."

"My brother is a great medicine!" said the cunning savage; "he will try?"

A gesture of assent was the answer. The Huron was content with the assurance, and resuming his pipe, he awaited the proper moment to move. The impatient Heyward, inwardly execrating the cold customs of the savages, which required such a sacrifice to appearances, was fain to assume an air of indifference, equal to that maintained by the chief, who was in truth, a near relative of the afflicted woman. The minutes lingered, and the delay had seemed an hour to the adventurer in empiricism, when the Huron laid aside his pipe, and drew his robe across his breast, as if about to lead the way to the lodge of the invalid. Just then, a warrior of powerful frame darkened the door, and stalking silently among the attentive group, he seated himself on one end of that low pile of brush, which sustained Duncan on its other. The latter cast an impatient look at his neighbour, and felt his flesh creep with uncontrollable

horror, when he found himself in actual contact with Magua.

The sudden return of this artful and dreaded chief, caused a delay in the intended departure of the Huron. Several pipes that had been extinguished, were lighted again; while the new comer, without speaking a word, drew his tomahawk from his girdle, and filling the bowl on its head, began to inhale the vapours of the weed through the hollow handle, with as much indifference, as if he had not been absent two weary days on a long and toilsome hunt. Ten minutes, which appeared so many ages to Duncan, might have passed in this manner; and the warriors were fairly enveloped in a cloud of white smoke, before one of them uttered the significant word—

"Welcome! Has my friend found the moose?"

"The young men stagger under their burthens," returned Magua. "Let 'Reed-that-bends' go on the hunting path; he will meet them."

A deep and awful silence succeeded the

utterance of the forbidden name. Each pipe dropped from the lips of its owner, as though all had inhaled an impurity at the same instant. The smoke wreathed above their heads in little eddies, and curling in a spiral form, it ascended swiftly through the opening in the roof of the lodge, leaving the place beneath clear of its fumes, and each dark visage distinctly visible. The eyes of most of the warriors were riveted on the earth; though a few of the younger and less gifted of the party, suffered their wild and glaring balls to roll in the direction of a white headed savage, who sate between two of the most venerated chiefs of the tribe. There was nothing in the air or attire of this Indian, that would seem to entitle him to such a distinction. The former was rather depressed, than remarkable for the proud bearing of the natives; and the latter was such as was commonly worn by the ordinary men of the nation. Like most around him, for more than a minute, his look too was on the ground; but trusting his eyes, at length, to steal a glance aside, he perceived that he was becoming

an object of general attention. Then he arose, and lifted his voice amid the general silence.

"It was a lie," he said; "I had no son! He who was called by that name is forgotten; his blood was pale, and came not from the veins of a Huron; the wicked Chippewas cheated my squaw! The Great Spirit has said, that the family of Wiss-en-tush should end—he is happy who knows that the evil of his race dies with himself! I have done."

The father then looked round and about him, as if seeking commendation for his stoicism, in the eyes of his auditors. But the stern customs of his people had made too severe an exaction of the feeble old man. The expression of his eye contradicted his figurative and boastful language, while every muscle in his swarthy and wrinkled visage was working with inward anguish. Standing a single minute to enjoy his bitter triumph, he turned away, as if sickening at the gaze of men, and veiling his face in his blanket, he walked from the lodge with the noiseless step of

an Indian, and sought, in the privacy of his own abode, the sympathy of one like himself, aged, forlorn, and childless.

The Indians, who believe in the hereditary transmission of virtues and defects in character, suffered him to depart in silence. Then, with an elevation of breeding that many in a more cultivated state of society might profitably emulate, one of the chiefs drew the attention of the young men from the weakness they had just witnessed by saying, in a cheerful voice, addressing himself in courtesy to Magua, as the newest comer—

"The Delawares have been like bears after the honey-pots, prowling around my village. But who has ever found a Huron asleep!"

The darkness of the impending cloud which precedes a burst of thunder, was not blacker than the brow of Magua, as he exclaimed—

"The Delawares of the Lakes!"

"Not so. They who wear the petticoats of squaws on their own river. One of them has been passing the tribe."

"Did my young men take his scalp?"

"His legs were good, though his arm is better for the hoe than the tomahawk," returned the other, pointing to the immovable form of Uncas.

Instead of manifesting any womanish curiosity to feast his eyes with the sight of a captive from a people he was known to have so much reason to hate, Magua continued to smoke, with the meditative air that he usually maintained, when there was no immediate call on his cunning or his eloquence. Although secretly amazed at the facts betrayed in the speech of the aged father, he permitted himself to ask no questions, reserving all his inquiries for a more suitable moment. It was only after a sufficient interval that he shook the ashes from his pipe, replaced the tomahawk, tightened his girdle, and arose, casting, for the first time, a glance in the direction of the prisoner, who stood a little behind him. The wary, though seemingly abstracted, Uncas, caught a glimpse of the movement, and turning suddenly to the light, their looks met. Near a minute these two bold and

untamed spirits stood regarding one another steadily in the eye, neither quailing in the least before the fierce gaze he encountered. The form of Uncas dilated, and his nostrils opened like a tiger at bay; but so rigid and unyielding was his posture, that he might easily have been converted, by the imagination, into an exquisite and faultless representation of the warlike deity of his tribe. The lineaments of the quivering features of Magua proved more ductile; his countenance gradually lost its character of defiance in an expression of ferocious joy, and heaving a breath from the very bottom of his chest, he pronounced aloud the formidable name of—

"Le Cerf Agile!"

Each warrior sprang upon his feet at the utterance of the well-known appellation, and there was a short period, during which the stoical constancy of the natives was completely conquered by surprise. The hated and yet respected name was repeated, as by one voice, carrying the sound even beyond the limits of the lodge. The women and children, who lingered around the

entrance, took up the words in an echo, which was succeeded by another shrill and plaintive howl. The latter was not yet ended, when the sensation among the men had entirely abated. Each one in presence seated himself, as though ashamed of his precipitation, but it was many minutes before their meaning eyes ceased to roll towards their captive, in curious examination of a warrior who had so often proved his prowess on the best and proudest of their nation.

Uncas enjoyed his victory, but was content with merely exhibiting his triumph, by a quiet and proud curl of the lip; an emblem of scorn that belongs to all time and every nation. Magua caught the expression, and raising his arm, he shook it at the captive—the light silver ornaments attached to his bracelet rattling with the trembling agitation of the limb, as, in a tone of vengeance, he exclaimed, in English—

"Mohican, you die!"

"The healing waters will never bring the dead Hurons to life!" returned Uncas,

in the music of the Delawares; "the tumbling rivers washes their bones! their men are squaws; their women owls. Go—call together the Huron dogs, that they may look upon a warrior. My nostrils are offended; they scent the blood of a coward!"

The latter allusion struck deep, and the injury rankled. Many of the Hurons understood the strange tongue in which the captive spoke, among which number was Magua. This cunning savage beheld, and instantly profited by, his advantage. Dropping the light robe of skin from his shoulder, he stretched forth his arm, and commenced a burst of his dangerous and artful eloquence. However much his influence among his people had been impaired by his occasional and besetting weakness, as well as by his desertion of the tribe, his courage, and his fame as an orator, were undeniable. He never spoke without auditors, and rarely without making converts to his opinions. On the present occasion, his native powers were stimulated by the keenest thirst for revenge.

He again recounted the events of the

attack on the island at Glenn's; the death of his associates; and the escape of their most formidable enemies. Then he described the nature and position of the mount whither he had led such captives as had fallen into their hands. Of his own bloody intentions towards the maidens, and of his baffled malice, he made no mention, but passed rapidly on to the surprise by the party of "la Longue Carabine" and its fortunate termination. Here he paused, and looked about him in affected veneration for the departed—but, in truth, to note the effect of his opening narrative. As usual, every eye was riveted on his face. Each dusky figure seemed a breathing statue, so motionless was the posture, so intense the attention of the individual.

Then Magua dropped his voice, which had hitherto been clear, strong, and elevated, and touched upon the merits of the dead. No quality that was likely to command the sympathy of an Indian escaped his notice. One had never been known to follow the chase in vain; another had been indefatigable on the trail of their enemies. This was brave; that, generous. In short,

he so managed his allusions, that in a nation which was composed of so few families, he contrived to strike every chord that might find, in its turn, some breast in which to vibrate.

"Are the bones of my young men," he concluded, "in the burial place of the Hurons! You know they are not. Their spirits are gone towards the setting sun, [illegible]d are already crossing the great waters, [illegible]happy hunting grounds. But they [illegible]l without food, without guns or [illegible], without moccasins, naked and poor [illegible]y were born. Shall this be? Are [illegible] souls to enter the land of the just, [illegible]e hungry Iroquois, or unmanly Delawares; or shall they meet their friends with arms in their hands, and robes on their backs? What will our fathers think the tribes of the Wyandots have become? They will look on their children with a dark eye, and say, go; a Chippewa has come hither with the name of a Huron. Brothers, we must not forget the dead; a red skin never ceases to remember. We will load the back of this Mohican, until he staggers under our bounty, and dispatch

him after my young men. They call to us for aid, though our ears are not open; they say, forget us not. When they see the spirit of this Mohican toiling after them with his burthen, they will know we are of that mind. Then will they go on happy; and our children will say, 'so did our fathers to their friends, so must we do to them.' What is a Yengee! we have slain many, but the earth is still pale. A stain on the name of a Huron can only be hid by blood that comes from the veins of an Indian. Let, then, this Delaware die."

The effect of such an harangue, delivered in the nervous language, and with the emphatic manner of a Huron orator, could scarcely be mistaken. Magua had so artfully blended the natural sympathies with the religious superstition of his auditors, that their minds, already prepared by custom to sacrifice a victim to the manes of their countrymen, lost every vestige of humanity in a wish for instant revenge. One warrior in particular, a man of wild and ferocious mien, had been conspicuous for the attention he had given to the words of

the speaker. His countenance had changed with each passing emotion, until it settled into a continued and deadly look of malice. As Magua ended, he arose, and uttering the yell of a demon, his polished little axe was seen glancing in the torch light, as he whirled it above his head. The motion and the cry were too sudden for words to interrupt his bloody intention. It appeared as if a bright gleam shot from his hand, which was crossed at the same moment by a dark and powerful line. The former was the tomahawk in its passage; the latter the arm that Magua darted forward to divert its aim. The quick and ready motion of the chief was not entirely too late. The keen weapon cut the short war-plume from the scalping tuft of Uncas, and passed through the frail wall of the lodge, as though it were hurled from some formidable engine.

Duncan had seen the threatening action, and sprang upon his feet, with a heart which, while it leaped into his throat, swelled with the most generous resolution in behalf of his friend. A glance told him that the blow had failed, and terror changed

to admiration. Uncas stood still, looking his enemy in the eye, with features that seemed superior to every emotion. Marble could not be colder, calmer, or steadier, than the countenance he put upon this sudden and vindictive attack. Then, as if pitying a want of skill which had proved so fortunate to himself, he smiled, and muttered a few words of contempt in his own soft and musical tongue.

"No!" said Magua, after satisfying himself of the safety of the captive; "the sun must shine upon his shame; the squaws must see his flesh tremble, or our revenge will be like the play of boys. Go—take him where there is silence; let us see if a Delaware can sleep at night and in the morning, die!"

The young men whose duty it was to guard the prisoner, instantly passed their ligaments of bark across his arms, and led him from the lodge, amid a gloomy, profound, and ominous silence. It was only as the figure of Uncas stood in the opening of the door that his firm step hesitated. There he turned, and in the sweeping and haughty

glance that he threw around the circle of his enemies, Duncan caught a look, which he was glad to construe into an expression that he was not entirely deserted by hope.

Magua, was content with his success, or too much occupied with his secret purposes, to push his inquiries any farther. Shaking his mantle, and folding it on his bosom, he also quitted the place, without pursuing a subject that might have proved so fatal to the individual at his elbow. Notwithstanding his rising resentment, his natural firmness, and his anxiety in behalf of Uncas, Heyward felt sensibly relieved by the absence of so dangerous and so subtle a foe. The excitement produced by the speech gradually subsided. The warriors resumed their seats, and clouds of smoke once more filled the lodge. For near half an hour, not a syllable was uttered, or scarcely a look cast aside—a grave and meditative silence being in the ordinary succession to every scene of violence and commotion amongst those beings, who were alike so impetuous, and yet so self-restrained.

When the chief who had solicited the aid of Duncan had finished his pipe, he made a final and successful movement towards departing. A motion of a finger was the intimation he gave the supposed physician to follow; and passing through the clouds of smoke, Duncan was glad, on more accounts than one, to be able at last to breathe the pure air of a cool and refreshing summer evening.

Instead of pursuing his way among those lodges where Heyward had already made his unsuccessful search, his companion turned aside, and proceeded directly toward the base of an adjacent mountain, which overhung the temporary village. A thicket of brush skirted its foot, and it became necessary to proceed through a crooked and narrow path. The boys had resumed their sports in the clearing and were enacting a mimic chase to the post among themselves. In order to render their games as like the reality as possible, one of the boldest of their number had conveyed a few brands into some piles of tree-tops, that had hitherto escaped the burning. The blaze of one

of these fires lighted the way of the chief and Duncan, and gave a character of additional wildness to the rude scenery At a little distance from a bald rock, and directly in its front, they entered a grassy opening, which they prepared to cross. Just then fresh fuel was added to the fire, and a powerful light penetrated even to that distant spot. It fell upon the white surface of the mountain, and was reflected downward upon a dark and mysterious looking being, that arose unexpectedly in their path.

The Indian paused, as if doubtful whether to proceed, and permitted his companion to approach his side. A large black ball, which at first seemed stationary, now began to move in a manner that to the latter was inexplicable. Again the fire brightened, and its glare fell more distinctly on the object. Then even Duncan knew it, by its restless and sideling attitudes, which kept the upper part of its form in constant motion, while the animal itself appeared seated, to be a bear. Though it growled loudly and fiercely, and there were

instants when its glistening eye-balls might be seen, it gave no other indication of hostility. The Huron, at least, seemed assured that the intentions of this singular intruder were peaceable, for after giving it an attentive examination, he quietly pursued his course.

Duncan, who knew that the animal was often found domesticated among the Indians, followed the example of his companion, believing that some favourite of the tribe had found its way into the thicket in search of food. They passed it unmolested. Though obliged to come nearly in contact with the monster, the Huron, who had at first so warily determined the character of his strange visiter, was now content with proceeding without wasting a moment in further examination; but Heyward was unable to prevent his eyes from looking backward, in a sort of salutary watchfulness against attacks in the rear. His uneasiness was in no degree diminished, when he perceived the beast rolling along their path, and following their footsteps. He would have spoken, but the Indian at that moment

shoved aside a door of bark, and entered a cavern in the bosom of the mountain.

Profitting by so easy a method of retreat, Duncan stepped after him, and was gladly closing the slight cover to the opening, when he felt it drawn from his hand by the beast, whose shaggy form immediately darkened the passage. They were now in a straight and long gallery, in a chasm of the rocks, where retreat, without encountering the animal, was impossible. Making the best of the circumstances, the young man pressed forward, keeping as close as possible to his conductor. The bear growled frequently at his heels, and once or twice its enormous paws were laid on his person, as though disposed to prevent his further passage into the den.

How long the nerves of Heyward would have sustained him in this extraordinary situation, it might be difficult to decide, for, happily, he soon found relief. A glimmer of light had constantly been in their front, and they now arrived at the place whence it proceeded.

A large cavity in the rock had been

rudely fitted to answer the purposes of many apartments. The subdivisions were simple, but ingenious; being composed of stone, sticks, and bark intermingled. Openings above admitted the light by day, and at night fires and torches supplied the place of the sun. Hither the Hurons had brought most of their valuables, especially those which more particularly pertained to the nation; and hither, as it now appeared, the sick woman, who was believed to be the victim of supernatural power, had been transported also under an impression, that her tormenter would find more difficulty in making his assaults through walls of stone, than through the leafy coverings of the lodges. The apartment into which Duncan and his guide first entered, had been exclusively devoted to her accommodation. The latter approached her bed-side, which was surrounded by females, in the centre of whom Heyward was surprised to find his missing friend David.

A single look was sufficient to apprise the pretended leech that the invalid was far beyond his powers of healing. She lay

in a sort of paralysis, indifferent to the objects which crowded before her sight, and happily unconscious of suffering. Heyward was far from regretting that his mummeries were to be performed on one who was much too ill to take an interest in their failure or success. The slight qualm of conscience which had been excited by the intended deception was instantly appeased at the sight, and he began busily to collect his thoughts, in order to enact his part with suitable spirit, when he found he was about to be anticipated in his skill by an attempt to prove the power of music.

Gamut, who had stood prepared to pour forth his spirit in song when the visiters entered, after delaying a moment, drew a strain from his pipe, and commenced a hymn that might have worked a miracle, had faith in its efficacy been of much avail. He was allowed to proceed to the close, the Indians respecting his imaginary infirmity, and Duncan too glad of the delay to hazard the slightest interruption. As the dying cadence of his strains was falling

on the ears of the latter, he started aside at hearing them repeated behind him, in a voice half human and half sepulchral. Looking around, he beheld the shaggy monster seated on end, in a shadow of the cavern, where, while his restless body swung in the uneasy manner of the animal, it repeated, in a sort of low growl, sounds, if not words, which bore some slight resemblance to the melody of the singer.

The effect of so strange an echo on David, may better be imagined than described. His eyes opened, as if he doubted their truth; and his voice became instantly mute in excess of wonder. A deep laid scheme of communicating some important intelligence to Heyward, was driven from his recollection by an emotion which very nearly resembled fear, but which he was fain to believe was admiration. Under its influence he exclaimed aloud—"She expects you, and is at hand"—and precipitately left the cavern.

CHAPTER III.

Snug. "Have you the lion's part written? Pray you, if it be, give it me, for I am slow of study.

Quince. You may do it extempore, for it is nothing but roaring."

Midsummer's Night Dream.

THERE was a strange blending of the ridiculous, with that which was solemn, in this scene. The beast still continued its rolling, and apparently untiring, movements, though its ludicrous attempt to imitate the melody of David ceased the instant the latter abandoned the field. The words of Gamut were, as has been seen, in his native tongue; and to Duncan they seemed pregnant with some hidden meaning, though nothing present assisted him in discovering the object of their allusion. A speedy end was, however, put to every conjecture on the subject, by the manner of

the chief, who advanced to the bed side of the invalid, and beckoned away the whole groupe of female attendants that had clustered there in lively curosity to witness the skill of the stranger. He was implicitly, though reluctantly, obeyed; and when the low echo which rang along the hollow, natural gallery, from the distant closing door had ceased, pointing towards his insensible daughter, he said—

"Now let my brother show his power."

Thus unequivocally called on to exercise the functions of his assumed character, Heyward was apprehensive that the smallest delay might prove dangerous. Endeavouring then to collect his ideas, he prepared to commence that species of incantation, and those uncouth rites, under which the Indian conjurers are accustomed to conceal their actual ignorance and impotency. It is more than probable, that in the disordered state of his thoughts, he would soon have fallen into some suspicious, if not fatal error, had not his incipient attempts been interrupted by a fierce growl from the quadruped. Three several times did he renew his efforts

to proceed, and as often was he met by the same unaccountable opposition, each interruption seeming more savage and threatening than the preceding.

"The cunning ones are jealous," said the Huron; "I go. Brother, the woman is the wife of one of my bravest young men; deal justly by her. Peace," he added, beckoning to the discontented beast to be quiet; "I go."

The chief was instantly as good as his word, and Duncan now found himself alone in that wild and desolate abode with the helpless invalid, and the fierce and dangerous brute. The latter listened to the movements of the Indian, with that air of sagacity that a bear is known to possess, until another echo announced that he had also left the cavern, when it turned and came waddling up to Duncan, before whom it seated itself in its natural attitude, erect like a man. The youth looked anxiously about him for some weapon, with which he might make resistance worthy of his reputation, against the attack he now seriously expected.

It seemed, however, as if the humour of the animal had suddenly changed. Instead of continuing its discontented growls, or manifesting any further signs of anger, the whole of its shaggy body shook violently, as though it were agitated by some strange internal convulsion. The huge and unwieldy talons pawed stupidly about the grinning muzzle, and while Heyward kept his eyes riveted on its movements with jealous watchfulness, the grim head fell on one side, and in its place appeared the honest sturdy countenance of the scout, who was indulging, from the bottom of his soul, in his own peculiar expression of merriment.

"Hist!" said the wary woodsman, interrupting Heyward's exclamation of surprise; "the varlets are about the place, and any sounds that are not natural to witchcraft, would bring them back upon us in a body!"

"Tell me the meaning of this masquerade; and why you have attempted so desperate an adventure!"

"Ah! reason and calculation are often

outdone by accident," returned the scout. "But as a story should always commence at the beginning, I will tell you the whole in order. After we parted, I placed the Commandant and the Sagamore in an old beaver lodge, where they are safer from the Hurons than they would be in the garrison of Edward; for your high nor-west Indians, not having as yet got the traders much among them, continue to venerate the beaver. After which, Uncas and I pushed for the other encampment, as was agreed; have you seen the lad?"

"To my great grief!—he is captive, and condemned to die at the rising of the sun."

"I had misgivings that such would be his fate," resumed the scout, in a less confident and joyous tone. But soon regaining his naturally firm voice, he continued—"His bad fortune is the true reason of my being here, for it would never do to abandon such a boy to the Hurons! A rare time the knaves would have of it, could they tie the 'bounding elk' and the 'longue carabine,' as they call me to the same stake!

Though why they have given me such a name I never knew, there being as little likeness between the gifts of 'kill deer' and the performance of one of your real Canada carabynes, as there is between the natur of a pipe-stone and a flint!"

"Keep to your tale," said the impatient Heyward; "we know not at what moment the Hurons may return."

"No fear of them. A conjuror must have his time like a straggling priest in the settlements. We are as safe from interruption, as a missionary would be at the beginning of a two hours discourse. Well, Uncas and I fell in with a return party of the varlets; the lad was much too forward for a scout; nay, for that matter, being of hot blood, he was not so much to blame; and after all, one of the Hurons proved a coward, and in fleeing led him into an ambushment!"

"And dearly has he paid for the weakness!" exclaimed Duncan.

The scout significantly passed his hand across his own throat, and nodded, as if he said, "I comprehend your meaning." After

which, he continued, in a more audible, though scarcely more intelligible language—

"After the loss of the boy, I turned upon the Hurons, as you may judge. There have been scrimmages atween one or two of their outlyers and myself; but that is neither here nor there. So, after I had shot the imps, I got in pretty nigh to the lodges without further commotion. Then, what should luck do in my favour, but lead me to the very spot where one of the most famous conjurors of the tribe was dressing himself, as I well knew, for some great battle with Satan—though why should I call that luck, which it now seems was an especial ordering of Providence! So, a judgematical rap over the head stiffened the lying impostor for a time, and leaving him a bit of walnut for his supper, to prevent any uproar, and stringing him up atween two saplings, I made free with his finery, and took the part of a bear on myself, in order that the operations might proceed."

"And admirably did you enact the cha-

racter! the animal itself might have been shamed by the representation."

"Lord, major," returned the flattered woodsman, "I should be but a poor scholar, for one who has studied so long in the wilderness, did I not know how to set forth the movements and natur of such a beast! Had it been now a catomount, or even a full sized painter, I would have embellished a performance for you worth regarding! But it is no such marvellous feat to exhibit the feats of so dull a beast; though, for that matter too, a bear may be over acted! Yes, yes; it is not every imitator that knows natur may be outdone easier than she is equalled. But all our work is yet before us! where is the gentle one?"

"Heaven knows; I have examined every lodge in the village without discovering the slightest trace of her presence in the tribe."

"You heard what the singer said, as he left us—'she is at hand, and expects you.'"

"I have been compelled to believe he alluded to this unhappy woman."

"The simpleton was frightened, and

blundered through his message, but he had a deeper meaning, here are walls enough to divide whole settlements. A bear ought to climb; therefore will I take a look above them. There may be honey-pots hid in these rocks, and I am a beast, you know, that has a hankering for the sweets."

The scout looked behind him, laughing at his own conceit, while he clambered up the partition, imitating as he went the clumsy motions of the beast he represented; but the instant the summit was gained, he made a gesture for silence, and slid down with the utmost precipitation.

"She is here," he whispered, "and by that door you will find her. I would have spoken a word of comfort to the afflicted soul, but the sight of such a monster might well upset her reason. Though, for that matter, major, you are none of the most inviting yourself in your paint."

Duncan, who had already sprung eagerly forward, drew instantly back on hearing these discouraging words.

"Am I then so very revolting?" he demanded, with an air of manifest chargin.

"You might not startle a wolf, or turn the Royal Americans from a charge; but I have seen the time when you had a better favoured look, major," returned the scout, dryly; "your streaked countenances are not ill judged of by the squaws, but young women of white blood give the preference to their own colour. See," he added, pointing to a place where the water trickled from a rock, forming a little crystal spring, before it found an issue through the adjacent crevices; "you may easily get rid of the Sagamore's daub, and when you come back, I will try my hand at a new embellishment. It's as common for a conjuror to alter his paint, as for a buck in the settlements to change his finery."

The deliberate woodsman had little occasion to hunt for arguments to enforce his advice. He was yet speaking when Duncan availed himself of the water. In a moment, every frightful or offensive mark was obliterated, and the youth appeared again in the fine and polished lineaments with which he had been gifted by nature.

Thus prepared for an interview with his mistress, he took a hasty leave of his companion, and disappeared through the indicated passage. The scout witnessed his departure with complacency, nodding his head after him, and muttering his good wishes; after which, he very coolly set about an examination of the state of the larder among the Hurons—the cavern, among other purposes, being used as a receptacle for the fruits of their hunts.

Duncan had no other guide than a distant glimmering light, which served, however, the office of a polar star to the lover. By its aid he was enabled to enter the haven of his hopes, which was merely another apartment of the cavern, that had been solely appropriated to the safe keeping of so important a prisoner, as a daughter of the commandant of William Henry. It was profusely strewed with the plunder of that unlucky fortress. In the midst of this confusion he found the maiden, pale, anxious, and terrified; but still lovely. David had prepared her for such a visit.

"Duncan!" she exclaimed, in a voice that seemed to tremble at the sounds created by itself.

"Alice!" he answered, leaping carelessly among trunks, boxes, arms, and furniture, until he stood at her side.

"I knew, Duncan, that you would never desert me," she said, looking up with a momentary glow of pleasure beaming on her otherwise dejected countenance. "But you are alone! grateful as it is to be thus remembered, I could wish to think you are not entirely alone!"

Duncan, observing that she trembled in a manner which betrayed an inability to continue standing, gently induced her to be seated, while he recounted those leading incidents which it has been our task to record. Alice listened with breathless interest; and though the young man touched lightly on the sorrows of the stricken father, taking care, however, not to wound the self-love of his auditor, the tears ran as freely down the cheeks of the daughter, as though she had never wept before. The soothing tenderness of Duncan, however,

soon quieted the first burst of her emotions, and she then heard him to the close with undivided attention, if not with composure.

"And now, Alice," he added, "you will see how much is still expected of you. By the assistance of our experienced and invaluable friend, the scout, we may find our way from this savage people, but you will have to exert your utmost fortitude. Remember, that you fly to the arms of your venerable parent, and how much his happiness, as well as your own, depends on those exertions."

"Can I do otherwise for a father who has done so much for me!"

"And for me too!" continued the youth, gently pressing the hand he held in both his own.

The look of innocence and surprise, which he received, in return, convinced Duncan of the necessity of being more explicit.

"This is neither the place nor the occasion to detain you with selfish wishes, sweet Alice," he added; "but what heart loaded like mine would not wish to cast its burthen!

They say misery is the closest of all ties; our common suffering in your behalf left but little to be explained between your father and myself."

"And dearest Cora, Duncan; surely Cora was not forgotten!"

"Not forgotten! no; regretted as woman was seldom mourned before. Your venerable father knew no difference between his children; but I—Alice, you will not be offended, when I say, that to me her worth was in a degree obscured—"

"Then you knew not the merit of my sister," said Alice, withdrawing her hand; "of you she ever speaks as of one who is her dearest friend!"

"I would gladly believe her such," returned Duncan, hastily; "I could wish her to be even more; but with you, Alice, I have the permission of your father to aspire to a still nearer and dearer tie."

The maiden trembled violently, and there was an instant, during which she bent her face aside, yielding to the emotions common to her sensitive sex; but they quickly passed away, leaving her completely mis-

tress of her deportment, if not of her affections.

"Heyward," she said, looking him full in the eye, with a touching expression of innocence and dependency, "give me the sacred presence and the holy sanction of that parent, before you urge me farther."

"Though more I should not, less I could not say," the youth was about to answer, when he was interrupted by a light tap on his shoulder. Starting to his feet, he turned, and confronting the intruder, his looks fell on the dark form and malignant visage of Magua. The deep, guttural laugh of the savage, sounded, at such a moment, to Duncan, like the hellish taunt of a demon. Had he pursued the sudden and fierce impulse of the instant, he would have cast himself on the Huron, and committed their fortunes to the issue of a deadly struggle. But, without arms of any description, ignorant of what succours his subtle enemy could command, and charged with the safety of one who was just then dearer than ever to his heart, he no sooner entertained, than he abandoned the desperate intention.

"What is your purpose?" said Alice, meekly folding her arms on her bosom, and struggling to conceal an agony of apprehension in behalf of Heyward, in the usual cold and distant manner with which she received the visits of her captor.

The exulting Indian had resumed his austere countenance, though he drew warily back before the menacing glance of the young man's fiery eye. He regarded both his captives for a moment with a steady look, and then stepping aside, he dropped a log of wood across a door different from that by which Duncan had entered. The latter now comprehended the manner of his surprise, and believing himself irretrievably lost, he drew Alice to his bosom, and stood prepared to meet a fate which he hardly regretted, since it was to be suffered in such company. But Magua meditated no immediate violence. His first measures were very evidently taken to secure his new captive; nor did he even bestow a second glance at the motionless forms in the centre of the cavern, until he had completely cut off every hope of retreat

through the private outlet he had himself used. He was watched in all his movements by Heyward, who however remained firm, still folding the fragile form of Alice to his heart, at once too proud and too hopeless to ask favour of an enemy so often foiled. When Magua had effected his object, he approached his prisoners, and said, in English—

"The pale-faces trap the cunning beavers; but the red-skins know how to take the Yengeese!"

"Huron, do your worst!" exclaimed the excited Heyward, forgetful that a double stake was involved in his life; "you and your vengeance are alike despised."

"Will the white man speak these words at the stake?" asked Magua; manifesting, at the same time, how little faith he had in the other's resolution, by the sneer that accompanied his words.

"Here; singly to your face," continued the undaunted Heyward, "or in the presence of your assembled nation!"

"Le Renard Subtil is a great chief!" returned the Indian; "he will go and

bring his young men, to see how bravely a pale-face can laugh at the tortures."

He turned away while speaking, and was about to leave the place through the avenue by which Duncan had approached, when a low, menacing growl caught his ear, and caused him to hesitate. The figure of the bear appeared in the door, where it sate rolling from side to side, in its customary restlessness. Magua, like the father of the sick woman, eyed it keenly for a moment, as if to ascertain its character. He was far above the more vulgar superstitions of his tribe, and so soon as he recognized the well known attire of the conjuror, he prepared to pass it in cool contempt. But a louder and more threatening growl caused him again to pause. Then he seemed as if suddenly resolved to trifle no longer, and moved resolutely forward. The mimic animal, which had advanced a little, retired slowly in his front, until it arrived again at the pass, when rearing on its hinder legs, it beat the air with its paws, in the manner practised by its more brutal prototype.

"Fool!" exclaimed the chief, in Huron, "go play with the children and squaws; leave men to their wisdom."

He once more endeavoured to pass the supposed empyric, scorning even the parade of threatening to use the keen knife, or glittering tomahawk, that was pendant from his belt. Suddenly, the beast extended its arms, or rather legs, and enclosed him, in a grasp, that might have vied with the far-famed power of the "bear's hug" itself. Heyward had watched the whole procedure, on the part of Hawk-eye, with breathless interest. At first he relinquished his hold of Alice; then he caught up a thong of buckskin, which had been used around some bundle, and when he beheld his enemy with his two arms pinned to his side, by the iron muscles of the scout, he rushed upon him, and effectually secured them there. Arms, legs, and feet, were encircled in twenty folds of the thong, in less time than we have taken to record the circumstance. When the formidable Huron was completely pinioned, the scout released his

hold, and Duncan laid his enemy on his back, utterly helpless.

Throughout the whole of this sudden and extraordinary operation, Magua, though he had struggled violently, until assured he was in the hands of one whose nerves were far better strung than his own, had not uttered the slightest exclamation. But when Hawk-eye, by way of making a summary explanation of his conduct, removed the shaggy jaws of the beast, and exposed his own rugged and earnest countenance to the gaze of the Huron, the philosophy of the latter was so far mastered, as to permit him to utter the never-failing—

"Hugh!"

"Ay! you've found your tongue!" said his undisturbed conqueror; "now, in order that you shall not use it to our ruin, I must make free to stop your mouth."

As there was no time to be lost, the scout immediately set about effecting so necessary a precaution; and when he had gagged the Indian, his enemy might safely have been considered as "hors de combat."

"By what place did the imp enter?"

asked the industrious scout, when his work was ended. "Not a soul has passed my way since you left me."

Duncan pointed out the door by which Magua had come, and which now presented too many obstacles to a quick retreat.

"Bring on the gentle one then," continued his friend; "we must make a push for the woods by the other outlet."

"'Tis impossible!" said Duncan; "fear has overcome her, and she is helpless. Alice! my sweet, my own Alice, arouse yourself; now is the moment to fly. 'Tis in vain! she hears, but is unable to follow. Go, noble and worthy friend; save yourself, and leave me to my fate!"

"Every trail has its end, and every calamity brings its lesson!" returned the scout. "There, wrap her in them Indian cloths. Conceal all of her little form. Nay, that foot has no fellow in the wilderness; it will betray her. All, every part. Now take her in your arms, and follow. Leave the rest to me."

Duncan, as may be gathered from the words of his companion, was eagerly obey-

ing; and as the other finished speaking, he took the light person of Alice in his arms, and followed on the footsteps of the scout. They found the sick woman as they had left her, still alone, and passed swiftly on, by the natural gallery, to the place of entrance. As they approached the little door of bark, a murmur of voices without announced that the friends and relatives of the invalid were gathered about the place, patiently awaiting a summons to re-enter.

"If I open my lips to speak," Hawk-eye whispered, "my English, which is the genuine tongue of a white-skin, will tell the varlets that an enemy is among them. You must give 'em your jargon, major; and say, that we have shut the evil spirit in the cave, and are taking the woman to the woods, in order to find strengthening roots. Practise all your cunning, for it is a lawful undertaking."

The door opened a little, as if one without was listening to the proceedings within, and compelled the scout to cease his directions. A fierce growl instantly repelled the eves-dropper, and then the scout boldly

threw open the covering of bark, and left the place, enacting the character of the bear as he proceeded. Duncan kept close at his heels, and soon found himself in the centre of a cluster of twenty anxious relatives and friends.

The crowd fell back a little, and permitted the father, and one who appeared to be the husband of the woman, to approach.

"Has my brother driven away the evil spirit?" demanded the former. "What has he in his arms?"

"Thy child," returned Duncan, gravely; "the disease has gone out of her; it is shut up in the rocks. I take the woman to a distance, where I will strengthen her against any further attacks. She shall be in the wigwam of the young man when the sun comes again."

When the father had translated the meaning of the stranger's words into the Huron language, a suppressed murmur announced the satisfaction with which this intelligence was received. The chief himself waved his hand for Duncan to proceed, saying

aloud, in a firm voice, and with a lofty manner—

"Go—I am a man, and I will enter the rock and fight the wicked one!"

Heyward had gladly obeyed, and was already past the little groupe, when these startling words arrested him.

"Is my brother mad!" he exclaimed; "is he cruel! He will meet the disease, and it will enter him; or he will drive out the disease, and it will chase his daughter into the woods. No—let my children wait without, and if the spirit appears, beat him down with clubs. He is cunning, and will bury himself in the mountain, therefore, when he sees how many are prepared to fight him."

This singular warning had the desired effect. Instead of entering the cavern, the father and husband drew their tomahawks, and posted themselves in readiness to deal their vengeance on the imaginary tormentor of their sick relative, while the women and children broke branches from the bushes, or seized fragments of the rock, with a similar intention. At this favourable

moment the counterfeit conjurors disappeared.

Hawk-eye, at the same time that he had presumed so far on the nature of the Indian superstitions, was not ignorant that they were rather tolerated than relied on by the wisest of the chiefs. He well knew the value of time in the present emergency. Whatever might be the extent of the self-delusion of his enemies, and however it had tended to assist his schemes, the slightest cause of suspicion, acting on the subtle nature of an Indian, would be likely to prove fatal. Taking the path, therefore, that was most likely to avoid observation, he rather skirted than entered the village. The warriors were still to be seen in the distance, by the fading light of the fires, stalking from lodge to lodge. But the children had abandoned their sports for their beds of skins, and the quiet of night was already beginning to prevail over the turbulence and excitement of so busy and important an evening.

Alice revived under the renovating influence of the open air, and as her physical rather than her mental powers had been

the subject of her weakness, she stood in no need of any explanation of that which had occurred.

"Now let me make an effort to walk," she said, when they had entered the forest, blushing, though unseen, that she had not been sooner able to quit the arms of Duncan; "I am, indeed, restored."

"Nay, Alice, you are yet too weak."

The maiden struggled gently to release herself, and the reluctant Heyward was compelled to part with his precious burthen. The representative of the bear had certainly been an entire stranger to the delicious emotions of the lover, while his arms encircled his mistress, and he was, perhaps, a stranger also to the nature of that feeling of ingenuous shame, that oppressed the trembling Alice, as they made such diligent progress in their flight. But when he found himself at a suitable distance from the lodges, he made a halt, and spoke on a subject of which he was thoroughly the master.

"This path will lead you to the brook," he said; "follow its northern bank until you

come to a fall; mount the hill on your right, and you will see the fires of the other people. There you must go, and demand protection; if they are true Delawares, you will be safe. A distant flight with that gentle one, just now, is impossible. The Hurons would follow up our trail, and master our scalps, before we had got a dozen miles. Go, and Providence be with you."

"And you!" demanded Heyward in surprise; "surely we part not here!"

"The Hurons hold the pride of the Delawares; the last of the high blood of the Mohicans, is in their power!" returned the scout; "I go to see what can be done in his favour. Had they mastered your scalp, major, a knave should have fallen for every hair it held, as I promised; but if the young Sagamore is to be led to the stake, the Indians shall see also how a man without a cross can die!"

Not in the least offended with the decided preference that the sturdy woodsman gave to one who might in some degree be called the child of his adoption, Dun-

can still continued to urge such reasons against so desperate an effort as presented themselves. He was aided by Alice, who mingled her entreaties with those of Heyward, that he would abandon a resolution that promised so much danger, with such little hopes of success. Their eloquence and ingenuity were expended in vain. The scout heard them attentively, but impatiently, and finally closed the discussion by answering, in a tone that instantly silenced Alice, while it told Heyward how fruitless any further remonstrances would be.

"I have heard," he said, "that there is a feeling in youth, which binds man to woman, closer than the father is tied to the son. It may be so. I have seldom been where women of my colour dwell; but such may be the gifts of nature in the settlements! You have risked life, and all that is dear to you, to bring off this gentle one, and I suppose that some such disposition is at the bottom of it all. As for me, I taught the lad the real character of a rifle; and well has he paid me for it! I have fou't at his side in many a bloody

skrimmage; and so long as I could hear the crack of his piece in one ear, and that of the Sagamore in the other, I knew no enemy was on my back. Winters and summers, nights and days, have we roved the wilderness in company, eating of the same dish, one sleeping while the other watched; and afore it shall be said that Uncas was taken to the torment, and I at hand——There is but a single Ruler of us all, whatever may be the colour of the skin; and him I call to witness—that before the Mohican boy shall perish for the want of a friend, good faith shall depart the 'arth, and 'kill deer' become as harmless as the tooting we'pon of the singer!"

Duncan released his hold on the arm of the scout, who turned, and steadily retraced his steps towards the lodges. After pausing a moment to gaze at his retiring form, the successful and yet sorrowful Heyward, and his mistress, took their way together towards the distant village of the Delawares.

CHAPTER IV.

"*Bot.* Let me play the lion too."—*Midsummer's Night Dream.*

NOTWITHSTANDING the high resolution of Hawk-eye, he fully comprehended all the difficulties and dangers he was about to incur. In his return to the camp, his acute and practised intellects were intently engaged in devising means to counteract a watchfulness and suspicion on the part of his enemies, that he knew were in no degree inferior to his own. Nothing but the colour of his skin saved the lives of Magua and the conjuror, who would have been the first victims to his security, had not the scout believed such an act, however congenial it might be to the nature of an Indian, utterly unworthy of one who

boasted a descent from men that knew no cross of blood. Accordingly, he trusted to the withes and ligaments with which he had bound his captives, and pursued his way directly towards the centre of the lodges.

As he approached the buildings, his steps became more deliberate, and his vigilant eye suffered no sign whether friendly or hostile, to escape him. A neglected hut was a little in advance of the others, and appeared as though it had been deserted when half completed—most probably on account of failing in some of the more important requisites; such as of wood or water. A faint light glimmered through its cracks, however, and announced, that notwithstanding its imperfect structure, it was not now without a tenant. Thither, then, the scout proceeded, like a prudent general, who was about to feel the advanced positions of his enemy, before he hazarded his main attack.

Throwing himself into a suitable posture for the beast he represented, Hawk-eye crawled to a little opening, where he might

command a view of the interior. It proved to be the abiding-place of David Gamut. Hither the faithful singing-master had now brought himself, together with all his sorrows, his apprehensions, and his meek dependence on the protection of Providence. At the precise moment when his ungainly person came under the observation of the scout, in the manner just mentioned, the woodsman himself, though in his assumed character, was the subject of the solitary being's profoundest reflections.

However implicit the faith of David was in the performance of ancient miracles, he eschewed the belief of any direct supernatural agency in the management of modern morality. In other words, while he had implicit faith in the ability of Balaam's ass to speak, he was somewhat sceptical on the subject of a bear's singing; and yet he had been assured of the latter, on the testimony of his own exquisite organs! There was something in his air and manner, that betrayed to the scout the utter confusion of the state of his mind. He was seated on a pile of brush, a few

twigs from which occasionally fed his low fire, with his head leaning on his arm, in a posture of melancholy musing. The costume of the votary of music had undergone no other alteration from that so lately described, except that he had covered his bald head with the triangular beaver, which had not proved sufficiently alluring to excite the cupidity of any of his captors.

The ingenious Hawk-eye, who recalled the hasty manner in which the other had abandoned his post at the bed-side of the sick woman, was not without his suspicions concerning the subject of so much solemn deliberation. First making the circuit of the hut, and ascertaining that it stood quite alone, and that the character of its inmate was likely to protect it from visitors, he ventured through its low door, into the very presence of Gamut. The position of the latter brought the fire between them; and when Hawk-eye had seated himself on end, near a minute elapsed, during which the two remained regarding each other without speaking. The suddenness and the nature of the surprise, had nearly

proved too much for—we will not say the philosophy—but for the faith and resolution of David. He fumbled for his pitch-pipe, and arose with a confused intention of attempting a musical exorcism.

"Dark and mysterious monster!" he exclaimed, while with trembling hands he disposed of his auxiliary eyes, and sought his never-failing resource in trouble, the gifted version of the Psalms; "I know not your nature nor intents; but if aught you meditate against the person and rights of one of the humblest servants of the temple, listen to the inspired language of the youth of Israel, and repent."

The bear shook his shaggy sides in an inexplicable emotion, and then a well-known voice replied—

"Put up your tooting we'pon, and teach your throat modesty. Five words of plain and comprehendible English, are worth, just now, an hour of squalling."

"What art thou?" demanded David, utterly disqualified to pursue his original intention, and nearly gasping for breath.

"A man like yourself; and one whose

blood is as little tainted by the cross of a bear as your own. Have you so soon forgotten from whom you received the foolish instrument you hold in your hand!"

"Can these things be?" returned David, breathing more freely, as the truth began to dawn upon him. "I have found many marvels during my sojourn with the heathen, but surely, nothing to excel this!"

"Come, come," returned Hawk-eye, uncasing his honest countenance, the better to assure the wavering confidence of his companion; "you may see a skin, which, if it be not as white as one of the gentle ones, has no tinge of red to it, that the winds of the heaven and the sun have not bestowed. Now let us to business."

"First tell me of the maiden, and of the youth who so bravely sought her," interrupted David.

"Ay, they are happily freed from the tomahawks of these varlets! But can you put me on the scent of Uncas?"

"The young man is in bondage, and much I fear is his death decreed. I greatly mourn, that one so well disposed should

die in his ignorance, and I have sought a goodly hymn—"

"Can you lead me to him?"

"The task will not be difficult," returned David, hesitating; "though I greatly fear your presence would rather increase than mitigate his unhappy fortunes."

"No more words, but lead on," returned Hawk-eye, concealing his face again, and setting the example in his own person, by instantly quitting the lodge.

As they proceeded, the scout ascertained that his companion found access to Uncas, under privilege of his imaginary infirmity, aided by the favour he had acquired with one of the guards, who, in consequence of speaking a little English, had been selected by David as the subject of a religious conversion. How far the Huron comprehended the intentions of his new friend may well be doubted; but as exclusive attention is as flattering to a savage as to a more civilized individual, it had, assuredly, produced the effect we have mentioned. It is unnecessary to repeat the shrewd manner with which the scout extracted these

particulars from the simple David, neither shall we dwell, in this place, on the nature of the instructions he delivered, when completely master of all the necessary facts, as the whole will be sufficiently explained to the reader in the course of the narrative.

The lodge in which Uncas was confined, was in the very centre of the village, and in a situation, perhaps, more difficult than any other to approach or leave without observation. But it was not the policy of Hawk-eye to affect the least concealment. Presuming on his disguise, and his ability to sustain the character he had assumed, he took the most plain and direct route to the place. The hour, however, afforded him some little of that protection, which he appeared so much to despise. The boys were already buried in sleep, and all the women, and most of the warriors, had now retired to their lodges for the night. Four or five of the latter, only, lingered about the door of the prison of Uncas, wary, but close observers of the manner of their captive.

At the sight of Gamut, accompanied by

one in the well known masquerade of their most distinguished conjuror, they readily made a passage to the entrance. Still, they betrayed no intention to depart. On the other hand, they were evidently disposed to remain bound to the place by an additional interest in the mysterious mummeries that they, of course, expected from such a visit. From the total inability of the scout to address the Hurons, in their own language, he was compelled to trust the conversation entirely to David. Notwithstanding the simplicity of the latter, he did ample justice to the instructions he had received, more than fulfilling the strongest hopes of his teacher.

"The Delawares are women!" he exclaimed, addressing himself to the savage, who had a slight understanding of the language in which he spoke; "the Yengeese, my foolish countrymen, have told them to take up the tomahawk, and strike their fathers in the Canadas, and they have forgotten their sex. Does my brother wish to hear 'le Cerf Agile' ask for his petticoats, and see him weep before the Hurons, at the stake?"

The exclamation, "hugh," delivered in a strong tone of assent, announced the gratification the savage would receive, in witnessing such an exhibition of weakness in an enemy so long hated and so much feared.

"Then let him step aside, and the cunning man will blow upon the dog! Tell it to my brothers."

The Huron explained the meaning of David to his fellows, who, in their turn, listened to the project with that sort of satisfaction, that their untamed spirits might be expected to find, in such a refinement in cruelty. They drew back a little from the entrance, and motioned to the supposed conjuror to enter. But the bear, instead of obeying, maintained the seat it had taken, and growled.

"The cunning man is afraid that his breath will blow upon his brothers, and take away their courage, too," continued David, improving the hint he received; "they must stand further off."

The Hurons, who would have deemed such a misfortune the heaviest calamity that could befall them, fell back in a body,

taking a position where they were out of ear-shot, though, at the same time, they could command a view of the entrance to the lodge. Then, as if satisfied of their safety, the scout left his position, and slowly entered the place. It was silent and gloomy, being tenanted solely by the captive, and lighted by the dying embers of a fire, which had been used for the purposes of cookery.

Uncas occupied a distant corner, in a reclining attitude, being rigidly bound, both hands and feet, by strong and painful withes. When the frightful object first presented itself to the young Mohican, he did not deign to bestow a single glance on the animal. The scout who had left David at the door, to ascertain they were not observed, thought it prudent to preserve his disguise until assured of their privacy. Instead of speaking, therefore, he exerted himself to enact one of the antics of the animal he represented. The young Mohican, who, at first, believed his enemies had sent in a real beast to torment him, and try his nerves, detected, in those per-

formances that to Heyward had appeared so accurate, certain blemishes, that at once betrayed the counterfeit. Had Hawk-eye been aware of the low estimation in which the more skilful Uncas held his representations, he would, probably, have prolonged the entertainment a little in pique. But the scornful expression of the young man's eye, admitted of so many constructions, that the worthy scout was spared the mortification of such a discovery. As soon, therefore, as David gave the preconcerted signal, a low, hissing sound was heard in the lodge, in place of the fierce growlings of the bear.

Uncas had cast his body back against the wall of the hut, and closed his eyes, as if willing to exclude such contemptible and disagreeable objects from his sight. But the moment the noise of the serpent was heard, he arose, and cast his looks on each side of him, bending his head low, and turning it inquiringly in every direction, until his keen eye rested on the shaggy monster, where it remained riveted, as though fixed by the power of a charm.

Again the same sounds were repeated, evidently proceeding from the mouth of the beast. Once more the eyes of the youth roamed over the interior of the lodge, and returning to their former resting-place, he uttered, in a deep, suppressed voice, the usual exclamation—

"Hugh!"

"Cut his bands," said Hawk-eye to David, who just then approached them.

The singer did as he was ordered, and Uncas found his limbs released. At the same moment, the dried skin of the animal rattled hurriedly, and presently the scout arose to his feet, in his proper person. The Mohican appeared to comprehend the nature of the attempt his friend had made, intuitively; neither tongue nor feature betrayed another symptom of surprise. When Hawk-eye had cast his shaggy vestment, which was done by simply loosing certain thongs of skin, he drew a long glittering knife, and put it in the hands of Uncas.

"The red Hurons are without," he said; "let us be ready."

At the same time, he laid his finger sig-

nificantly on another similar weapon; both being the fruits of his prowess among their enemies during the evening.

"We will go!" said Uncas.

"Whither?"

"To the Tortoises—they are the children of my grandfathers!"

"Ay, lad," said the scout in English, a language he was apt to use when a little abstracted in mind; "the same blood runs in your veins, I believe; but time and distance has a little changed its colour! What shall we do with the Mingoes at the door! They count six, and this singer is as good as nothing."

"The Hurons are boasters!" said Uncas, scornfully; "their 'totem' is a moose; and they run like snails. The Delawares are children of the tortoise; and they outstrip the deer!"

"Ay, lad, there is truth in what you say; and I doubt not, on a rush, you would pass the whole nation; and in a straight race of two miles, would be in, and get your breath again, afore a knave of them all was within hearing of the other village! But the gift

of a white man lies more in his arms than in his legs. As for myself, I can brain a Huron as well as a better man, but when it comes to a race, the knaves would prove too much for me."

Uncas, who had already approached the door, in readiness to lead the way, now recoiled, and placed himself once more in the bottom of the lodge. But Hawk-eye, who was too much occupied with his own thoughts to note the movement, continued speaking more to himself than to his companion. "After all," he said, "it is unreasonable to keep one man in bondage to the gifts of another. So, Uncas, you had better take the leap, while I will put on the skin again, and trust to cunning for want of speed."

The young Mohican made no reply, but quietly folded his arms, and leaned his body against one of the upright posts that supported the wall of the hut.

"Well," said the scout, looking up at him, in some surprise, "why do you tarry; there will be time enough for me, as the knaves will give chase to you at first."

"Uncas will stay," was the calm reply.

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"For what?"

"To fight with his father's brother, and die with the friend of the Delawares."

"Ay, lad," returned Hawk-eye, squeezing the hand of Uncas between his own iron fingers; "'twould have been more like a Mingo than a Mohican, had you left me. But I thought I would make the offer, seeing that youth commonly loves life. Well, what can't be done by main courage, in war, must be done by circumvention. Put on the skin—I doubt not you can play the bear nearly as well as myself."

Whatever might have been the private opinion of Uncas of their respective abilities, in this particular, his grave countenance manifested no opinion of his own superiority. He silently and expeditiously encased himself in the covering of the beast, and then awaited such other movements as his more aged companion saw fit to dictate.

"Now, friend," said Hawk-eye, addressing David, "an exchange of garments will be a great convenience to you, inasmuch as you are but little accustomed to the make-shifts of the wilderness. Here, take my hunting shirt and cap, and give

me your blanket and hat. You must trust me with the book and spectacles, as well as the tooter, too; if we ever meet again, in better times, you shall have all back again, with many thanks in the bargain."

David parted with the several articles named with a readiness that would have done great credit to his liberality, had he not certainly profited, in many particulars, by the exchange. Hawk-eye was not long in assuming his borrowed garments; and when his keen, restless eyes were hid behind the glasses, and his head was surmounted by the triangular beaver, as their statures were not dissimilar, he might readily have passed for the singer, by starlight. As soon as these dispositions were made, the scout turned to David and gave him his parting instructions.

"Are you much given to cowardice?" he bluntly asked, by way of obtaining a suitable understanding of the whole case, before he ventured a prescription.

"My pursuits are peaceful, and my temper, I humbly trust, is greatly given to mercy and love," returned David, a little

nettled at so direct an attack on his manhood; "but there are none who can say, that I have ever forgotten my faith in the Lord, even in the greatest straits."

"Your chiefest danger will be at the moment when the savages find out that they have been deceived. If you are not then knocked on the head, your being a non-compossur will protect you, and you'll then have good reason to expect to die in your bed. If you stay, it must be to sit down here in the shadow, and take the part of Uncas, until such time as the cunning of the Indians discover the cheat, when, as I have already said, your time of trial will come. So choose for yourself, to make a rush, or tarry here."

"Even so," said David firmly; "I will abide in the place of the Delaware; bravely and generously has he battled in my behalf, and this, and more will I dare in his service."

"You have spoken as a man, and like one who, under wiser schooling, would have been brought to better things. Hold your head down, and draw in your legs; their formation might tell the truth too

early. Keep silent as long as may be; and it would be wise when you do speak, to break out suddenly in one of your shoutings, which will serve to remind the Indians that you are not altogether as responsible as men should be. If, however, they take your scalp, as I trust and believe they will not, depend on it, Uncas and I will not forget the deed, but revenge it, as becomes true warriors and trusty friends."

"Hold!" said David perceiving that with this assurance they were about to leave him; "I am an unworthy and humble follower of one, who taught not the damnable principle of revenge. Should I fall, therefore, seek no victims to my manes, but rather forgive my destroyers; and if you remember them at all, let it be in prayers for the enlightening of their minds, and for their eternal welfare!"

The scout hesitated, and appeared to muse deeply.

"There is a principle in that," he said, "different from the law of the woods! and yet it is fair and noble to reflect upon!" Then, heaving a heavy sigh, probably

among the last he ever drew in pining for the condition he had so long abandoned, he added—"It is what I would wish to practise myself, as one without a cross of blood, though it is not always easy to deal with an Indian, as you would with a fellow christian. God bless you, friend; I do believe your scent is not greatly wrong, when the matter is duly considered, and keeping eternity before the eyes, though much depends on the natural gifts, and the force of temptation."

So saying, the scout returned, and shook David cordially by the hand; after which act of friendship, he immediately left the lodge, attended by the new representative of the beast.

The instant Hawk-eye found himself under the observation of the Hurons, he drew up his tall form in the rigid manner of David, threw out his arm in the act of keeping time, and commenced, what he intended for an imitation of his psalmody. Happily, for the success of this delicate adventure, he had to deal with ears but little practised in the concord of sweet

sounds, or the miserable effort would infallibly have been detected. It was necessary to pass within a dangerous proximity of the dark group of savages, and the voice of the scout grew louder as they drew nigher. When at the nearest point, the Huron, who spoke the English, thrust out an arm, and stopped the supposed singing-master.

"The Delaware dog!" he said, leaning forward, and peering through the dim light to catch the expression of the other's features; "is he afraid? will the Hurons hear his groans?"

A growl, so exceedingly fierce and natural proceeded from the beast, that the young Indian released his hold, and started aside, as if to assure himself that it was not a veritable bear, and no counterfeit, that was rolling before him. Hawk-eye, who feared his voice would betray him to his subtle enemies, gladly profited by the interruption, to break out anew, in such a burst of musical expression, as would, probably, in a more refined state of society, have been termed a "grand crash." Among

his actual auditors, however, it merely gave him an additional claim to that respect, which they never withhold from such as are believed to be the subjects of mental alienation. The little knot of Indians drew back, in a body, and suffered, as they thought, the conjuror and his inspired assistant to proceed.

It required no common exercise of fortitude in Uncas and the scout, to continue the dignified and deliberate pace they had assumed in passing the lodges; especially, as they immediately perceived, that curiosity had so far mastered fear, as to induce the watchers to approach the hut, in order to witness the effect of the incantation. The least injudicious or impatient movement on the part of David might betray them, and time was absolutely necessary to insure the safety of the scout. The loud noise the latter conceived it politic to continue, drew many curious gazers to the doors of the different huts, as they passed; and once or twice a dark looking warrior stepped across their path, led to the act by superstition or watchfulness. They were not, however,

interrupted; the darkness of the hour, and the boldness of the attempt, proving their principal friends.

The adventurers had got clear of the village, and were now swiftly approaching the shelter of the woods, when a loud and long cry arose from the lodge where Uncas had been confined. The Mohican started on his feet and shook his shaggy covering, as though the animal he counterfeited was about to make some desperate effort.

"Hold!" said the scout, grasping his friend by the shoulder, "let them yell again! 'Twas nothing but their wonderment."

He had no occasion to delay, for at the next instant a burst of cries filled the outer air, and ran along the whole extent of the village. Uncas cast his skin, and stepped forth in his own lofty and beautiful proportions. Hawk-eye tapped him lightly on the shoulder, and glided ahead.

"Now let the devils strike our scent!" said the scout, tearing two rifles, with all their attendant accoutrements from beneath a bush, and flourishing 'kill deer' as he

handed Uncas a weapon; "two, at least, will find it to their deaths."

Then throwing their pieces to a long trail, like sportsmen in readiness for their game, they dashed forward, and were soon buried in the sombre darkness of the forest.

CHAPTER V.

"*Ant.* I shall remember;
When Cæsar says, *do this*, it is performed."
Julius Cæsar.

THE impatience of the savages who lingered about the prison of Uncas, as has been seen, had overcome their dread of the conjuror's breath. They stole cautiously, and with beating hearts, to a crevice, through which the faint light of the fire was glimmering. For several minutes, they mistook the form of David for that of their prisoner; but the very accident which Hawk-eye had foreseen, occurred. Tired of keeping the extremities of his long person so near together, the singer gradually suffered the lower limbs to extend themselves, until one of his misshapen feet actually came in contact with, and shoved aside the embers of the

fire. At first, the Hurons believed the Delaware had been thus deformed by witchcraft. But when David, unconscious of being observed, turned his head, and exposed his simple, mild countenance, in place of the stern and haughty lineaments of their prisoner, it would have exceeded the credulity of even a native to have doubted any longer. They rushed together into the lodge, and laying their hands, with but little ceremony, on their captive, immediately detected the imposition. Then arose the cry first heard by the fugitives. It was succeeded by the most frantic and angry demonstration of vengeance. David, however firm in his determination to cover the retreat of his friends, was now compelled to believe that his own final hour had come. Deprived of his book and his pipe, he was fain to trust to a memory that rarely failed him on such subjects, and breaking forth in a loud and impassioned strain, he endeavoured to smooth his passage into the other world, by singing the opening verse of a funeral anthem. The Indians were seasonably reminded of his infirmity, and rushing

into the open air, they aroused the village in the manner described.

A native warrior fights as he sleeps, without the protection of any thing defensive. The sounds of the alarm were, therefore, hardly uttered, before two hundred men were afoot, and ready for the battle or the chase, as either might be required. The escape was soon known, and the whole tribe crowded in a body around the council lodge, impatiently awaiting the instruction of their chiefs. In such a sudden demand on their wisdom, the presence of the cunning Magua could scarcely fail of being needed. His name was mentioned, and all looked round in wonder, that he did not appear. Messengers were then dispatched to his lodge requiring his presence.

In the mean time, some of the swiftest and most discreet of the young men were ordered to make the circuit of the clearing, under cover of the woods, in order to ascertain that their suspected neighbours, the Delawares, designed no mischief. Women and children ran to and fro; and, in short,

the whole encampment exhibited another scene of wild and savage confusion. Gradually, however, these symptoms of disorder diminished, and in a few minutes the oldest and most distinguished chiefs were assembled in the lodge, in grave consultation.

The clamour of many voices soon announced that a party approached, who might be expected to communicate some intelligence that would explain the mystery of the novel surprise. The crowd without gave way, and several warriors entered the place, bringing with them the hapless conjuror, who had been left so long by the scout in such a painful duresse.

Notwithstanding this man was held in very unequal estimation among the Hurons, some believing implicitly in his power, and others deeming him an impostor, he was now listened to by all, with the deepest attention. When his brief story was ended, the father of the sick woman stepped forth, and in a few pithy expressions, related, in his turn, what he knew. These two narratives gave a proper direction to the subse-

quent inquiries, which were now made with the characteristic gravity and cunning of the savages.

Instead of rushing in a confused and disorderly throng to the cavern, ten of the wisest and firmest among the chiefs were selected to prosecute the investigation. As no time was to be lost, the instant the choice was made, the individuals appointed rose, in a body, and left the place without speaking. On reaching the entrance, the younger men in advance made way for their seniors, and the whole proceeded along the low, dark gallery, with the firmness of warriors ready to devote themselves to the public good, though, at the same time, secretly doubting the nature of the power with which they were about to contend.

The outer apartment of the cavern was silent and gloomy. The woman lay in her usual place and posture, though there were those present who had just affirmed they had seen her borne to the woods, by the supposed "medicine of the white men." Such a direct and palpable contradiction of the tale related by the father, caused all

eyes to be turned upon him. Chafed by the silent imputation, and inwardly troubled by so unaccountable a circumstance, the chief advanced to the side of the bed, and stooping cast an incredulous look at the features, as if still distrusting their reality. His daughter was dead.

The unerring feeling of nature for a moment prevailed, and the old warrior hid his eyes in sorrow and disappointment. Then recovering his self-possession, he faced his companions, and pointing towards the corpse, he said, in the language of his people—

"The wife of my young man has left us! the Great Spirit is angry with his children."

The mournful intelligence was received in solemn silence. After a short pause, one of the elder Indians was about to speak, when a dark looking object was seen rolling out of an adjoining apartment into the very centre of the room where they stood. Ignorant of the nature of the beings they had to deal with, the whole party drew back a little, and gazed in admiration, until the object fronted the light, and rising

frightfully on end, exhibited the distorted, but still fierce and sullen, features of Magua. The discovery was succeeded by a loud and general exclamation of amazement.

As soon, however, as the true situation of the chief was understood, several ready knives appeared, and his limbs and tongue were quickly released. The Huron arose, and shook himself like a lion quitting his lair. Not a word escaped him, though his hand played convulsively with the handle of his knife, while his lowering eyes scanned the whole party, as if they sought an object suited to the first burst of his vengeance.

It was happy for Uncas and the scout, and even David, that they were all beyond the reach of his arm at such a moment, for assuredly, no refinement in cruelty would then have deferred their deaths, in opposition to the promptings of the fierce temper that nearly choaked him. Meeting every where faces that he knew as friends, the savage grated his teeth together, like rasps of iron, and swallowed his passion, for want of a victim on whom to vent it.

This exhibition of anger was keenly noted by all present, and from an apprehension of exasperating a temper that was already chafed nearly to madness, several minutes were suffered to pass before another word was uttered. When, however, suitable time had elapsed, the oldest of the party spoke.

"My friend has found an enemy!" he said. "Is he nigh, that the Hurons may take revenge!"

"Let the Delaware die!" exclaimed Magua, in a voice of thunder.

Another long and expressive silence was observed, and was broken, as before, with due precaution, by the same individual.

"The Mohican is swift of foot, and leaps far," he said; "but my young men are on his trail."

"Is he gone?" demanded Magua, in tones so deep and guttural, that they seemed to proceed from his inmost chest.

"An evil spirit has been among us, and the Delaware has blinded our eyes."

"An evil spirit!" repeated the other, bitterly; "'tis the spirit that has taken the

lives of so many Hurons. The spirit that slew my young men at 'the tumbling river;' that took their scalps at the 'healing spring;' and who has, now, bound the arms of le Renard Subtil!"

"Of whom does my friend speak?"

"Of the dog who carries the heart and cunning of a Huron under a pale skin—la Longue Carabine."

The pronunciation of so terrible a name, produced the usual effect among his auditors. But when time was given for reflection, and the warriors remembered that their formidable and daring enemy had even been in the bosom of their encampment, working injury, fearful rage took the place of wonder, and all those fierce passions with which the bosom of Magua had just been struggling, were suddenly transferred to his companions. Some among them gnashed their teeth in anger, others vented their feelings in yells, and some, again, beat the air as frantically, as if the object of their resentment was suffering under their blows. But this sudden outbreaking of temper, as quickly subsided

in the still and sullen restraint they most affected in their moments of inaction.

Magua, who had, in his turn, found leisure for a little reflection, now changed his manner, and assumed the air of one who knew how to think and act with a dignity worthy of so grave a subject.

"Let us go to my people," he said; "they wait for us."

His companions consented, in silence, and the whole of the savage party left the cavern, and returned to the council lodge. When they were seated, all their eyes turned on Magua, who understood, from such an indication, that, by common consent they had devolved the duty of relating what had passed on him. He arose, and told his tale, without duplicity or reservation. The whole deception practised by both Duncan and Hawk-eye, was, of course, laid naked; and no room was found, even for the most superstitious of the tribe, any longer to affix a doubt on the character of the occurrences. It was but too apparent, that they had been insultingly, shamefully, disgracefully, deceived. When he had

ended, and resumed his seat, the collected tribe—for his auditors, in substance, included all the fighting men of the party—sate regarding each other like men astonished equally at the audacity and the success of their enemies. The next consideration, however, was the means and opportunities for revenge.

Additional pursuers were sent on the trail of the fugitives; and then the chiefs applied themselves in earnest to the business of consultation. Many different expedients were proposed by the elder warriors, in succession, to all of which Magua was a silent and respectful listener. That subtle savage had recovered his artifice and self-command, and now proceeded towards his object with his customary caution and skill. It was only when each one disposed to speak had uttered his sentiments, that he prepared to advance his own opinions. They were given with additional weight, from the circumstance, that some of the runners had already returned, and reported, that their enemies had been traced so far, as to leave no doubt of their having sought safety in

the neighbouring camp of their suspected allies, the Delawares. With the advantage of possessing this important intelligence, the chief warily laid his plans before his fellows, and, as might have been anticipated from his eloquence and cunning, they were adopted without a dissenting voice. They were, briefly, as follows, both in opinions and in motives.

It has been already stated, that in obedience to a policy rarely departed from, the sisters were separated so soon as they reached the Huron village. Magua had early discovered, that in retaining the person of Alice, he possessed the most effectual check on Cora. When they parted, therefore, he kept the former within reach of his hand, consigning the one he most valued to the keeping of the allies. The arrangement was understood to be merely temporary, and was made as much with a view to flatter his neighbours, as in obedience to the invariable rule of Indian policy.

While goaded, incessantly, by those revengeful impulses that in a savage seldom

slumber, the chief was still attentive to his more permanent, personal interests. The follies and disloyalty committed in his youth, were to be expiated by a long and painful penance, ere he could be restored to the full enjoyment of the confidence of his ancient people; and without confidence, there could be no authority in an Indian tribe. In this delicate and arduous situation, the crafty native had neglected no means of increasing his influence; and one of the happiest of his expedients, had been the success with which he had cultivated the favour of their powerful and most dangerous neighbour. The result of his experiments had answered all the expectations of his policy—for the Hurons were in no degree exempt from that governing principle of our nature, which induces man to value his gifts precisely in the degree that they are appreciated by others.

But while he was making this ostensible sacrifice to general considerations, Magua never lost sight of his individual motives. The latter had been frustrated by the unlooked-for events, which had thus, at a

single blow, placed all his prisoners beyond his controul, and he now found himself reduced to the necessity of suing for favours to those whom it had so lately been his policy to oblige.

Several of the chiefs had proposed deep and treacherous schemes to surprise the Delawares, and by gaining possession of their camp, to recover their prisoners by the same blow; for all agreed that their honour, their interests, and the peace and happiness of their dead countrymen, imperiously required them speedily to immolate some victims to their revenge. But plans so dangerous to attempt, and of such doubtful issue, Magua found little difficulty in defeating. He exposed their risque and fallacy with his usual skill; and it was only after he had removed every impediment, in the shape of opposing advice, that he ventured to propose his own projects.

He commenced by flattering the self-love of his auditors; a never-failing method of commanding attention. When he had enumerated the many different occasions

on which the Hurons had exhibited their courage and prowess, in the punishment of insults, he digressed in a high encomium on the virtue of wisdom. He painted the quality, as forming the great point of difference between the beaver and other brutes; between brutes and men; and, finally, between the Hurons, in particular, and the rest of the human race. After he had sufficiently extolled the property of discretion, he undertook to exhibit in what manner its use was applicable to the present situation of their tribe. On the one hand, he said, was their great pale father, the governor of the Canadas, who had looked upon his children with a hard eye, since their tomahawks had been so red; on the other, a people as numerous as themselves, who spoke a different language, possessed different interests, and loved them not, and who would be glad of any pretence to bring them in disgrace with the great white chief. Then he spoke of their necessities; of the gifts they had a right to expect for their past services; of their distance from their proper hunting grounds and native villages; and of the ne-

cessity of consulting prudence more, and inclination less, in such critical circumstances. When he perceived, that, while the old men applauded his moderation, many of the fiercest and most distinguished of the warriors listened to these politic plans with lowering looks, he cunningly led them back to the subject which they most loved. He spoke openly of the fruits of their wisdom, which he boldly pronounced would be a complete and final triumph over their enemies. He even darkly hinted that their success might be extended, with proper caution, in such a manner, as to include the destruction of all whom they had reason to hate. In short, he so blended the war-like with the artful, as to flatter the propensities of both parties, and to leave to each subject for hope, while neither could say, it clearly comprehended his intentions.

The orator, or the politician, who can produce such a state of things, is commonly popular with his contemporaries, however he may be treated by posterity. All perceived that more was meant than was uttered, and each one believed that the

hidden meaning was precisely such as his own faculties enabled him to anticipate.

In this happy state of things, it is not surprising that the management of Magua prevailed. The tribe consented to act with deliberation, and with one voice they committed the direction of the whole affair to the government of the chief, who had suggested such wise and intelligible expedients.

Magua had now attained one great object of all his cunning and enterprise. The ground he had lost in the favour of his people was completely regained, and he found himself even placed at the head of affairs. He was, in truth, their ruler; and so long as he could maintain his popularity no monarch could be more despotic, especially while the tribe continued in a hostile country. Throwing off, therefore, the appearance of consultation, he assumed the grave air of authority, necessary to support the dignity of his office.

Runners were dispatched for intelligence in different directions; spies were ordered to approach and feel the encampment of

the Delawares; the warriors were dismissed to their lodges, with an intimation that their services would soon be needed; and the women and children were ordered to retire, with a warning, that it was their province to be silent. When these several arrangements were made, Magua passed through the village, stopping here and there, to pay a visit where he thought his presence might be flattering to the individual. He confirmed his friends in their confidence; fixed the wavering; and gratified all. Then he sought his own lodge. The wife the Huron chief had abandoned, when he was chased from among his people, was dead. Children he had none; and he now occupied a hut, without companion of any sort. It was, in fact, the dilapidated and solitary structure in which David had been discovered, and whom he had tolerated in his presence, on those few occasions when they met, with the contemptuous indifference of a haughty superiority.

Hither, then, Magua retired, when his labours of policy were ended. While others slept, however, he neither knew nor sought

any repose. Had there been one sufficiently curious to have watched the movements of the newly elected chief, he would have seen him seated in a corner of his lodge, musing on the subject of his future plans, from the hour of his retirement, to the time he had appointed for the warriors to assemble again. Occasionally, the air breathed through the crevices of the hut, and the low flame that fluttered about the embers of the fire, threw their wavering light on the person of the sullen recluse. At such moments, it would not have been difficult to have fancied the dusky savage the Prince of Darkness, brooding on his own fancied wrongs, and plotting evil.

Long before the day dawned, however, warrior after warrior entered the solitary hut of Magua, until they had collected to the number of twenty. Each bore his rifle, and all the other accoutrements of war; though the paint was uniformly peaceful. The entrance of these fierce looking beings was unnoticed; some seating themselves in the shadows of the place, and others standing like motionless statues, in profound silence,

until the whole of the designated band was collected.

Then Magua arose, and gave the signal to proceed, marching himself in advance. They followed their leader singly, and in that well known order, which has obtained the distinguishing appellation of "Indian file." Unlike other men engaged in the spirit-stirring business of war, they stole from their camp, unostentatiously and unobserved, resembling a band of gliding spectres, more than warriors seeking the bubble reputation by deeds of desperate daring.

Instead of taking the path which led directly towards the camp of the Delawares, Magua led his party for some distance down the windings of the stream, and along the little artificial lake of the beavers. The day began to dawn, as they entered the clearing, which had been formed by those sagacious and industrious animals. Though Magua, who had resumed his ancient garb, bore the outline of a fox, on the dressed skin which formed his robe, there was one chief of his party who carried the beaver

as his peculiar symbol, or "totem." There would have been a species of profanity in the omission, had this man passed so powerful a community of his fancied kindred, without bestowing some evidence of his regard. Accordingly, he paused, and spoke in words as kind and friendly, as if he were addressing more intelligent beings. He called the animals his cousins, and reminded them that his protecting influence was the reason they remained unharmed, while so many avaricious traders were prompting the Indians to take their lives. He promised a continuance of his favours, and admonished them to be grateful. After which he spoke of the expedition in which he was himself engaged, and intimated, though with sufficient delicacy and circumlocution, the expediency of bestowing on their relative a portion of that wisdom for which they were so renowned.

During the utterance of this extraordinary address, the companions of the speaker were as grave and as attentive to his language, as though they were all equally impressed with its propriety. Once or

twice black objects were seen rising to the surface of the water, and the Huron expressed pleasure, conceiving that his words were not bestowed in vain. Just as he had ended his address, the head of a large beaver was thrust from the door of a lodge, whose earthen wall had been much injured, and which the party had believed, from its situation, was uninhabited. Such an extraordinary sign of confidence was received by the orator as a highly favourable omen; and, though the animal retreated a little precipitately, he was lavish of his thanks and commendations.

When Magua thought sufficient time had been lost, in gratifying the family affection of the warrior, he again made the signal to proceed. As the Indians moved away in a body, and with a step that would have been inaudible to the ears of any common man, the same venerable looking beaver once more ventured his head from its cover. Had any of the Hurons turned to look behind them, they would have seen the animal watching their movements with an interest and sagacity that might easily

have been mistaken for reason. Indeed, so very distinct and intelligible were the devices of the quadruped, that even the most experienced observer would have been at a loss to account for its actions, until the moment when the party entered the forest, when the whole would have been explained, by seeing the entire animal issue from the lodge, uncasing, by the act, the grave and attentive features of Chingachgook from his mask of fur.

CHAPTER VI.

"Brief, I pray you; for you see, 'tis a busy time with me."
Much Ado About Nothing.

THE tribe, or rather half-tribe, of Delawares, which has been so often mentioned, and whose present place of encampment was so nigh the temporary village of the Hurons, could assemble about an equal number of warriors with the latter people. Like their neighbours, they had followed Montcalm into the territories of the English crown, and were making heavy and serious inroads on the hunting grounds of the Mohawks, though they had seen fit, with the mysterious reserve so common among the natives, to withhold their assistance at the moment when it was most required. The French had accounted for this unex-

pected defection on the part of their ally in various ways. It was the prevalent opinion, however, that they had been influenced by veneration for the ancient treaty, that had once made them dependent on the Iroquois for military protection, and now rendered them reluctant to encounter their former masters. As for the tribe itself, it had been content to announce to Montcalm, through his emissaries, with Indian brevity, that their hatchets were dull, and time was necessary to sharpen them. The politic captain of the Canadas had deemed it wiser to submit to entertain a passive friend, than, by any acts of ill-judged severity, to convert him into an open enemy.

On that morning when Magua led his silent party from the settlement of the beavers into the forest, in the manner described, the sun rose upon the Delaware encampment, as though it had suddenly burst upon a busy people, actively employed in all the customary avocations of high noon. The women ran from lodge to lodge, some engaged in preparing their morning's meal,

a few earnestly bent on seeking the comforts necessary to their habits, but more pausing to exchange hasty and whispered sentences with their friends. The warriors were lounging in groupes, musing more than they conversed; and when a few words were uttered, speaking like men who deeply weighed their opinions. The instruments of the chase were to be seen in abundance among the lodges; but none departed. Here and there, a warrior might be seen examining his arms, with an attention that is rarely bestowed on the implements, when no other enemy than the beasts of the forest are expected to be encountered. And, occasionally, the eyes of a whole groupe were turned simultaneously towards a large and silent lodge in the centre of the village, as if it contained the subject of their common thoughts.

During the existence of this scene, a man suddenly appeared at the farthest extremity of that platform of rock which formed the level of the village. He was without arms, and his paint tended rather to soften than increase the natural sternness of his austere

and marked countenance. When in full view of the Delawares, he stopped, and made a gesture of amity, by throwing his arm upwards toward heaven, and then letting it fall impressively on his breast. The inhabitants of the village answered his salute by a low murmur of welcome, and encouraged him to advance by similar indications of friendship. Fortified by these assurances, the dark figure left the brow of the natural rocky terrace, where it had stood a moment drawn in a strong outline against the blushing morning sky, and moved, with dignity, into the very centre of the huts. As he approached nothing was audible but the rattling of the light silver ornaments that loaded his arms and neck, and the tinkling of the little bells that fringed his deer-skin moccasins. He made, as he advanced, many courteous signs of greeting to the men he passed, neglecting to notice the women, however, as though he deemed their favour, in the present enterprise, of no importance. When he had reached the groupe, in which it was evident, by the haughtiness of their common mien, that the

principal chiefs were collected, the stranger paused, and then the Delawares saw that the active and erect form that stood before them, was that of the well known Huron chief, le Renard Subtil.

His reception was grave, silent, and wary. The warriors in front stepped aside, opening the way to their most approved orator by the action; one who spoke all those languages, that were cultivated among the northern aborigines.

"The wise Huron is welcome," said the Delaware, in the language of the Maquas; "he is come to eat his 'suc-ca-tush' with his brothers of the lakes!"

"He is come;" repeated Magua, bending his head with the dignity of an eastern prince.

The chief extended his arm, and taking the other by the wrist, they once more exchanged their friendly salutations. Then the Delaware invited his guest to enter his own lodge, and share his morning meal. The invitation was accepted, and the two warriors, attended by three or four of the old men, walked calmly away, leaving the rest of the tribe devoured by a desire to

understand the reasons of so unusual a visit, and yet not betraying the least impatience, by any sign or syllable.

During the short and frugal repast that followed, the conversation was extremely circumspect, and related entirely to the events of the hunt, in which Magua had so lately been engaged. It would have been impossible for the most finished breeding to wear more of the appearance of considering the visit as a thing of course, than did his hosts, notwithstanding every individual present was perfectly aware that it must be connected with some secret object, and that, probably, of the last importance to themselves. When the appetites of the whole were appeased, the squaws removed the trenchers and gourds, and the two parties began to prepare themselves for a keen and subtle trial of their wits.

"Is the face of my great Canada father turned again towards his Huron children?" demanded the orator of the Delawares.

"When was it ever otherwise!" returned Magua. "He calls my people his 'most beloved.'"

The Delaware gravely bowed his acquiescence to what he knew to be false, and continued—

"The tomahawks of your young men have been very red!"

"It is so; but they are now bright and dull—for the Yengeese are dead, and the Delawares are our neighbours!"

The other acknowledged the pacific compliment by a graceful gesture of the hand, and remained silent. Then Magua, as if recalled to such a recollection, by the allusion to the massacre, demanded—

"Does my prisoner give trouble to my brothers?"

"She is welcome."

"The path between the Hurons and the Delawares is short, and it is open; let her be sent to my squaws if she gives trouble to my brother."

"She is welcome," returned the chief of the latter nation, still more emphatically.

The baffled Magua continued silent several minutes, apparently indifferent, however, to the repulse he had received in

this, his opening, effort to regain possession of Cora.

"Do my young men leave the Delawares room on the mountains for their hunts?" he, at length, continued.

"The Lenape are rulers of their own hills," returned the other, a little haughtily.

"It is well. Justice is the master of a red-skin! Why should they brighten their tomahawks, and sharpen their knives against each other!. Are there not pale-faces for enemies!"

"Good!" exclaimed two or three of his auditors at the same time.

Magua waited a little, to permit his words to soften the feelings of the Delawares, before he added—

"Have there not been strange moccasins in the woods? Have not my brothers scented the feet of white men?"

"Let my Canada father come!" returned the other, evasively; "his children are ready to see him."

"When the Great Chief comes, it is to smoke with the Indians, in their wigwams. The Hurons say, too, he is welcome. But

the Yengeese have long arms, and legs that never tire! My young men dreamed they had seen the trail of the Yengeese nigh the village of the Delawares?"

"They will not find the Lenape asleep."

"It is well. The warrior whose eye is open, can see his enemy," said Magua, once more shifting his ground, when he found himself unable to penetrate the caution of his companion. "I have brought gifts to my brother. His nation would not go on the war path, because they did not think it well; but their friends have remembered where they lived."

When he had thus announced his liberal intention the crafty chief arose, and gravely spread his presents before the dazzled eyes of his hosts. They consisted principally of trinkets of little value, plundered from the slaughtered and captured females of William Henry. In the division of the baubles, the cunning Huron discovered no less art than in their selection. While he bestowed those of greater value on the two most distinguished warriors, one of whom was his host, he seasoned his offerings to

their inferiors with such well-timed and apposite compliments, as left them no grounds of complaint. In short, the whole ceremony contained such a happy blending of the profitable with the flattering, that it was not difficult for the donor immediately to read the effect of a generosity so aptly mingled with praise, in the eyes of those he addressed.

This well judged and politic stroke on the part of Magua, was not without its instantaneous results. The Delawares lost their stern gravity, in a much more cordial expression of features; and the host, in particular, after contemplating his own liberal share of the spoil, for some moments, with peculiar gratification, repeated, with strong emphasis, the words—

"My brother is a wise chief. He is welcome!"

"The Hurons love their friends the Delawares," returned Magua. "Why should they not! they are coloured by the same sun, and their just men will hunt in the same grounds after death. The red skins should be friends, and look with open

eyes on the white men. Has not my brother scented spies in the woods?"

The Delaware, whose name, in English signified "Hard-heart," an appellation that the French had translated into "Le-cœur-dur," forgot that obduracy of purpose, which had probably obtained him so significant a title. His countenance grew very sensibly less stern, and he now deigned to answer more directly.

"There have been strange moccasins about my camp. They have been tracked into my lodges."

"Did my brother beat out the dogs?" asked Magua, without adverting in any manner to the former equivocation of the chief.

"It would not do. The stranger is always welcome to the children of the Lenape."

"The stranger, but not the spy!"

"Would the Yengeese send their women as spies? Did not the Huron chief say he took women in the battle?"

"He told no lie. The Yengeese have sent out their scouts. They have been in

my wigwams, but they found there no one to say welcome. Then they fled to the Delawares—for, say they, the Delawares are our friends; their minds are turned from their Canada father!"

This insinuation was a home thrust, and one that, in a more advanced state of society, would have entitled Magua to the reputation of a skilful diplomatist. The recent defection of their tribe had, as they well knew themselves, subjected the Delawares to much reproach among their French allies, and they were now made to feel that their future actions were to be regarded with jealousy and distrust. There was no deep insight, into causes and effects, necessary to foresee that such a situation of things was likely to prove highly prejudicial to all their future movements. Their distant villages, their hunting grounds, and hundreds of their women and children, together with a material part of their physical force, were all, actually within the limits of the French territory. Accordingly, this alarming annunciation was received, as Magua intended,

with manifest disapprobation, if not with alarm.

"Let my father look in my face," said Le-cœurdur; "he will see no change. It is true, my young men did not go out on the war-path; they had dreams for not doing so. But they love and venerate the great white chief."

"Will he think so, when he hears that his greatest enemy is fed in the camp of his children! When he is told, a bloody Yengee smokes at your fire! That the pale-face, who has slain so many of his friends, goes in and out among the Delawares! Go —my great Canada Father is not a fool!"

"Where is the Yengee that the Delawares fear!" returned the other; "who has slain my young men! who is the mortal enemy of my Great Father!"

"La Longue Carabine."

The Delaware warriors started at the well known name, betraying, by their amazement, they now learnt, for the first time, that one so famous among the Indian allies of France, was within their power.

"What does my brother mean?" demanded Le-cœurdur, in a tone that, by its

wonder, far exceeded the usual apathy of his race.

"A Huron never lies," returned Magua, coldly, leaning his head against the side of the lodge, and drawing his slight robe across his tawny breast. "Let the Delawares count their prisoners; they will find one whose skin is neither red nor pale."

A long and musing pause succeeded. Then the chief consulted, apart, with his companions, and messengers were despatched to collect certain others of the most distinguished men of the tribe.

As warrior after warrior dropped in, they were each made acquainted, in turn, with the important intelligence that Magua had just communicated. The air of surprise, and the usual, low, deep, guttural exclamation, were common to them all. The news spread from mouth to mouth, until the whole encampment became powerfully agitated. The women suspended their labours, to catch such syllables as unguardedly fell from the lips of the consulting warriors. The boys deserted their sports, and walked fearlessly among their

fathers, looked up in curious admiration, as they heard the brief exclamations of wonder they so freely expressed, at the temerity of their hated foe. In short, every occupation was abandoned, for the time; and all other pursuits seemed discarded, in order that the tribe might freely indulge, after their own peculiar manner, in an open expression of their feelings.

When the excitement had a little abated, the old men disposed themselves seriously to a consideration of that which it became the honour and safety of their tribe to perform, under circumstances of so much delicacy and embarrassment. During all these movements, and in the midst of the general commotion, Magua had not only maintained his seat, but the very attitude he had originally taken, against the side of the lodge, where he continued as immoveable, and, apparently, as unconcerned, as if he had no interest in the result. Not a single indication of the future intentions of his hosts, however, escaped his vigilant eyes. With his consummate knowledge of the nature of the people with

whom he had to deal, he anticipated every measure on which they decided; and it might almost be said, that in many instances, he knew their intentions even before they became known to themselves.

The council of the Delawares was short. When it was ended, a general bustle announced that it was to be immediately succeeded by a solemn and formal assemblage of the nation. As such meetings were rare, and only called on occasions of the last importance, the subtle Huron, who still sate apart, a wily and dark observer of the proceedings, now knew that all his projects must be brought to their final issue. He, therefore, left the lodge, and walked silently forth to the place, in front of the encampment, whither the warriors were already beginning to collect.

It might have been half an hour before each individual, including even the women and children, was in his place. The delay had been created by the grave preparations that were deemed necessary to so solemn and unusual a conference. But, when the sun was seen climbing above the tops of that

mountain, against whose bosom the Delawares had constructed their encampment; most were seated; and as his bright rays darted from behind the outline of trees that fringed the eminence, they fell upon as grave, as attentive, and as deeply interested a multitude, as was probably ever before lighted by his morning beams. Its number somewhat exceeded a thousand souls.

In a collection of such serious savages, there is never to be found any impatient aspirant after premature distinction, standing ready to move his auditors to some hasty, and, perhaps, injudicious discussion, in order that his own reputation may be the gainer. An act of so much precipitancy and presumption, would seal the downfall of precocious intellect for ever. It rested solely with the oldest and most experienced of the men to lay the subject of their conference before the people. Until such an one chose to make some movement, no deeds in arms, no natural gifts, nor any renown as an orator, would have justified the slightest interruption. On the present occasion, the aged warrior whose

privilege it was to speak, was silent, seemingly oppressed with the magnitude of his subject. The delay had already continued long beyond the usual, deliberative pause, that always precedes a conference; but no sign of impatience, or surprise, escaped even the youngest boy. Occasionally, an eye was raised from the earth, where the looks of most were riveted, and strayed towards a particular lodge, that was, however, in no manner distinguished from those around it, except in the peculiar care that had been taken to protect it against the assaults of the weather.

At length, one of those low murmurs that are so apt to disturb a multitude, was heard, and the whole nation arose to their feet by a common impulse. At that instant, the door of the lodge in question opened, and three men issuing from it, slowly approached the place of consultation. They were all aged, even beyond that period to which the oldest present had reached; but one in the centre, who leaned on his companions for support, had numbered an amount of years, to which the human race

is seldom permitted to attain. His frame, which had once been tall and erect, like the cedar, was now bending under the pressure of more than a century. The elastic, light step of an Indian was gone, and in its place, he was compelled to toil his tardy way over the ground, inch by inch. His dark, wrinkled countenance, was in singular and wild contrast with his long white locks, which floated on his shoulders, in such thickness, as to announce that generations had probably passed away, since they had last been shorn.

The dress of this patriarch, for such, considering his vast age, in conjunction with his affinity and influence with his people, he might very properly be termed, was rich and imposing, though strictly after the simple fashions of the tribe. His robe was of the finest skins, which had been deprived of their fur, in order to admit of a hieroglyphical representation of various deeds in arms, done in former ages. His bosom was loaded with medals, some in massive silver, and one or two even in gold, the gifts of various christian poten-

tates, during the long period of his life. He also wore armlets, and cinctures above the ancles, of the latter precious metal. His head, on the whole of which the hair had been permitted to grow, the pursuits of war having so long been abandoned, was encircled by a sort of silver diadem, which, in its turn, bore lesser and more glittering ornaments, that sparkled amid the glossy hues of three drooping ostrich feathers, dyed a deep black, in touching contrast to the colour of his snow-white locks. His tomahawk was nearly hid in silver, and the handle of his knife shone like a horn of solid gold.

So soon as the first hum of emotion and pleasure, which the sudden appearance of this venerated individual created, had a little subsided, the name of "Tamenund" was whispered from mouth to mouth. Magua had often heard the fame of this wise and just Delaware; a reputation that even proceeded so far as to bestow on him the rare gift of holding secret communion with the Great Spirit, and which has since

transmitted his name, with some slight alteration, to the white usurpers of his ancient territory, as the imaginary, tutelar saint* of a vast empire. The Huron chief, therefore, stepped eagerly out a little from the throng, to a spot whence he might catch a nearer glimpse of the features of the man whose decision was likely to produce so deep an influence on his own fortunes.

The eyes of the old man were closed as though the organs were wearied with having so long witnessed the selfish workings of human passions. The colour of his skin differed from that of most around him, being richer and darker; the latter hue having been produced by certain delicate and mazy lines of complicated and yet beautiful figures, which had been traced over most of his person by the operation of tattooing. Notwithstanding the position of the Huron, he passed the observant and silent Magua without notice, and leaning

* St. Tammany.

on his two venerable supporters, proceeded to the high place of the multitude, where he seated himself in the centre of his nation, with the dignity of a monarch, and the air of a father.

Nothing could surpass the reverence and affection with which this unexpected visit, from one who belonged rather to another world than to this, was received by his people. After a suitable and decent pause, the principal chiefs arose, and approaching the patriarch, they placed his hands reverently on their heads, seeming to intreat a blessing. The younger men were content with touching his robe, or even with drawing nigh his person, in order to breathe in the atmosphere of one so aged, so just, and so valiant. None but the most distinguished among the youthful warriors even presumed so far as to perform the latter ceremony; the great mass of the multitude deeming it a sufficient happiness to look upon a form so deeply venerated, and so well beloved. When these acts of affection and respect were performed, the chiefs drew back again to their

several places, and a deep and breathing silence reigned in the whole encampment.

After a short delay, a few of the young men, to whom instructions had been whispered by one of the aged attendants of Tamenund, arose, left the crowd, and entered the lodge which has already been noted as the object of so much attention, throughout that morning. In a few minutes they re-appeared, escorting the individuals who had caused all these solemn preparations, towards the seat of judgment. The crowd opened in a lane, and when the party had re-entered, it closed in again, forming a large and dense belt of human bodies, arranged in an open circle.

CHAPTER VII.

"The assembly seated, rising o'er the rest,
Achilles thus the king of men address'd."

Pope's Homer.

Cora stood foremost among the prisoners, entwining her arms in those of Alice, in the fondest tenderness of sisterly love. Notwithstanding the fearful and menacing array of savages on every side of her, no apprehension on her own account could prevent the noble-minded maiden from keeping her eyes fastened on the pale and anxious features of the trembling Alice. Close at their side stood Heyward, with an interest in both, that, at such a moment of intense uncertainty, scarcely knew a preponderance in favour of her whom he most loved. Hawk-eye had placed himself a little in the rear, with a deference to the superior rank of his companions, that no

similarity in the state of their present fortunes could induce him to forget. Uncas was not among them.

When perfect silence was again restored, and after the usual, long, impressive pause, one of the two aged chiefs, who sate at the side of the patriarch, arose, and demanded aloud, in very intelligible English—

"Which of my prisoners is la Longue Carabine?"

Neither Duncan nor the scout made any answer. The former, however, glanced his eyes around the dark and silent assembly, and recoiled a pace, when they fell on the malignant visage of Magua. He saw, at once, that this wily savage had some secret agency in their present arraignment before the nation, and determined to throw every possible impediment in the way of the execution of his sinister plans. He had witnessed one instance of the summary punishment of the Indians, and now dreaded that his companion was to be selected for a second. In this dilemma, with little or no time for reflection, he suddenly determined to cloak

his invaluable friend, at any or eve[illegible] to himself. Before he had time, how[illegible] to speak, the question was repeated in a louder voice, and with a clearer utterance.

"Give us arms," the young man haughtily replied, "and place us in yonder woods. Our deeds shall speak for us!"

"This is the warrior whose name has filled our ears!" returned the chief, regarding Heyward with that sort of curious interest, which seems inseparable from man, when first beholding one of his fellows, to whom merit or accident, virtue or crime, has given notoriety. "What has brought the white man into the camp of the Delawares?"

"My necessities. I come for food, shelter, and friends."

"It cannot be. The woods are full of game. The head of a warrior needs no other shelter than a sky without clouds, and the Delawares are the enemies, and not the friends, of the Yengeese. Go—your mouth has spoken, while your heart has said nothing."

Duncan, a little at a loss in what manner

[redacted], remained silent; but the scout had listened attentively to all that passed, now advanced boldly to the front, and assumed the task of explaining.

"That I did not answer to the call for la Longue Carabine, was not owing either to shame or fear," he said; "for neither one nor the other is the gift of an honest man. But I do not admit the right of the Mingoes to bestow a name on one, whose friends have been mindful of his gifts, in this particular; especially, as their title is all a lie; 'kill-deer' being a genuine grooved barrel, and no carabine. I am the man, however, that got the name of Nathaniel from my kin; the compliment of Hawk-eye from the Delawares, who live on their own river; and whom the Iroquois have presumed to style the 'long rifle,' without any warranty from him who is most concerned in the matter."

The eyes of all present, which had hitherto been gravely scanning the person of Duncan, now turned, on the instant towards the upright, iron frame of this new pretender to so distinguished an appellation.

It was in no degree remarkable, that there should be found two who were willing to claim so great an honour; for impostors, though rare, were not unknown amongst the natives; but it was altogether material to the just and severe intentions of the Delawares, that there should be no mistake in the matter. Some of their old men consulted together, in private, and then, as it would seem, they determined to interrogate their visitor on the subject.

"My brother has said that a snake crept into my camp," said the chief to Magua; "which is he?"

The Huron pointed to the scout, but continued silent.

"Will a wise Delaware believe the barking of a wolf!" exclaimed Duncan, still more confirmed in the evil intentions of his ancient enemy; "a dog never lies, but when was a wolf known to speak the truth!"

The eyes of Magua flashed fire; but suddenly recollecting the necessity of maintaining his presence of mind, he turned away in silent disdain, well assured that the sagacity of the Indians would not fail to

extract the real merits of the point in controversy. He was not deceived; for, after another short consultation, the wary Delaware turned to him again, and expressed the determination of the chiefs, though in the most considerate language.

"My brother has been called a liar," he said; "and his friends are angry. They will show that he has spoken the truth. Give my prisoners guns, and let them prove which is the man."

Magua affected to consider the expedient, which he well knew proceeded from distrust of himself, as a compliment, and made a gesture of acquiescence, well content that his veracity should be supported by so skilful a marksman as the scout. The weapons were instantly placed in the hands of the friendly opponents, and they were bid to fire, over the heads of the seated multitude, at an earthen vessel, which lay, by accident, on a stump, some fifty yards from the place where they stood.

Heyward smiled to himself, at the idea of such a competition with the scout, though he determined to persevere in the de-

ception, until apprised of the designs of Magua. Raising his rifle, then, with the utmost care, and renewing his aim three several times, he fired. The bullet cut the wood within a few inches of the vessel, and a general exclamation of satisfaction announced that the shot was considered a singular proof of great skill in the use of the weapon. Even Hawk-eye nodded his head, as if he would say, it was better than he had expected. But, instead of manifesting an intention to contend with the successful marksman, he stood leaning on his rifle for more than a minute, like a man who was completely buried in deep thought. From this reverie he was, however, speedily awakened, by one of the young Indians who had furnished the arms, and who now touched his shoulder, saying, in exceedingly broken English—

"Can the pale-face beat it?"

"Yes, Huron!" exclaimed the scout, raising the short rifle in his right hand, and shaking it at Magua, with as much apparent ease as though it were a reed; "yes, Huron, I could strike you now, and no power of 'arth could prevent the deed!

The soaring hawk is not more certain of the dove, than I am this moment of you, did I choose to send a bullet to your heart! Why should I not! Why!—because the gifts of my colour forbid it, and I might draw down evil on tender and innocent heads! If you know such a being as God, thank him, therefore, in your inward soul —for you have reason!"

The flushed countenance, angry eye, and swelling figure of the scout, produced a sensation of secret awe in all that heard him. The Delawares held their breath in intense expectation; but Magua himself, even while he distrusted the forbearance of his enemy, remained as immovable and calm, where he stood, wedged in by the crowd, as though he grew to the fatal spot.

"Beat it," repeated the young Delaware at the elbow of the scout.

"Beat what, fool!—what!" exclaimed Hawk-eye, still flourishing the weapon angrily above his head, though his eye no longer sought the person of Magua.

"If the white man is the warrior he pretends," said the aged chief, "let him strike nigher to the mark."

The scout laughed tauntingly, and aloud —a noise that produced the startling effect of unnatural sounds on Heyward—and then dropping the piece, heavily, into his extended left hand, it was discharged, apparently by the shock, driving the fragments of the vessel high into the air, and scattering them on every side of the stump. Almost at the same instant, the heavy rattling sound of the rifle was heard, as he suffered it to fall, contemptuously, to the earth.

The first impression of so strange a scene was deep and engrossing admiration. Then a low, but increasing murmur, ran through the multitude, and finally swelled into sounds, that denoted lively opposition in the sentiments of the spectators. While some openly testified their satisfaction at such unexampled dexterity, by far the larger portion of the tribe were inclined to believe the success of the shot was the result of accident. Heyward was not slow to confirm an opinion that was so favourable to his own pretensions.

"It was all a chance!" he exclaimed; "none can shoot without an aim!"

"Chance!" echoed the excited woodsman, who was now stubbornly bent on maintaining his identity, at every hazard, and on whom the secret hints of Heyward to acquiesce in the deception were entirely lost. "Does yonder lying Huron, too, think it chance? Give him another gun, and place us face to face, without cover or dodge, and let Providence, and our own eyes, decide the matter atween us? I do not make the offer to you, major; for our blood is of a colour, and we serve the same master."

"That the Huron is a liar, is very evident," returned Heyward, coolly; "you have, yourself, heard him assert you to be la Longue Carabine."

It were impossible to say what violent assertion the stubborn Hawk-eye would have next made, in his headlong wish to vindicate his identity, had not the aged Delaware once more interposed,

"The hawk which comes from the clouds, can return when he will," he said; "give them the guns."

This time the scout seized the rifle with

avidity; nor had Magua, though he watched the movement of the marksman with jealous eyes, any further cause for apprehension.

"Now let it be proved, in the face of this tribe of Delawares, who is the better man," cried the scout, tapping the butt of his piece with that finger which had pulled so many fatal triggers. "You see the gourd hanging against yonder tree, major; if you are a marksman, fit for the borders, let me find that you can break its shell!"

Duncan noted the object, and prepared himself to renew the trial. The gourd was one of the usual little vessels used by the Indians, and was suspended from a dead branch of a small pine, by a thong of deer-skin, at the full distance of a hundred yards. So strangely compounded is the feeling of self-love, that the young soldier, while he knew the utter worthlessness of the suffrages of his savage umpires, forgot the sudden motives of the contest, in a wish to excel. It has been seen, already, that his skill was far from being contemptible, and he now resolved to put forth its nicest qualities. Had his life depended on the issue, the aim

of Duncan could not have been more deliberate and guarded. He fired; and three or four young Indians, who sprang forward at the report, announced with a shout, that the ball was in the tree, a very little on one side of the proper object. The warriors uttered a common ejaculation of pleasure, and then turned their eyes, inquiringly, on the movements of his rival.

"It may do for the Royal Americans!" said Hawk-eye, laughing once more in his own silent, heartfelt, manner; "but had my gun often turned so much from the true line, many a martin, whose skin is in a lady's muff, would now be in the woods; ay, and many a bloody Mingo, who has departed to his final account, would be acting his devaltries at this very day, atween the provinces. I hope the squaw who owns the gourd, has more of them in her wigwam, for this will never hold water again!"

The scout had shook his priming, and cocked his piece, while speaking; and, as he ended, he threw back a foot, and slowly raised the muzzle from the earth. The

motion was steady, uniform, and in one direction. When on a perfect level, it remained for a single moment without tremor or variation, as though both man and rifle were carved in stone. During that stationary instant, it poured forth its contents, in a bright, glancing, sheet of flame. Again the young Indians bounded forward, but their hurried search and disappointed looks announced, that no traces of the bullet were to be seen.

"Go," said the old chief to the scout, in a tone of strong disgust; "thou art a wolf in the skin of a dog. I will talk to the 'long rifle' of the Yengeese."

"Ah! had I that piece which furnished the name you use, I would obligate myself to cut the thong, and drop the gourd, instead of breaking it!" returned Hawk-eye perfectly undisturbed by the other's manner. "Fools, if you would find the bullet of a sharp-shooter of these woods, you must look *in* the object, and not around it?"

The Indian youths instantly comprehended his meaning—for this time he spoke

in the Delaware tongue—and tearing the gourd from the tree, they held it on high, with an exulting shout, displaying a hole in its bottom, which had been cut by the bullet, after passing through the usual orifice in the centre of its upper side. At this unexpected exhibition, a loud and vehement expression of pleasure burst from the mouth of every warrior present. It decided the question, and effectually established Hawk-eye in the possession of his dangerous reputation. Those curious and admiring eyes which had been turned again on Heyward, were finally directed to the weather-beaten form of the scout, who immediately became the principal object of attention to the simple and unsophisticated beings, by whom he was surrounded. When the sudden and noisy commotion had a little subsided, the aged chief resumed his examination.

"Why did you wish to stop my ears?" he said, addressing Duncan; "are the Delawares fools, that they could not know the young panther from the cat?"

"They will yet find the Huron a singing-bird," said Duncan, endeavouring to adopt the figurative language of the natives.

"It is good. We will know who can shut the ears of men. Brother," added the chief, turning his eyes on Magua, "the Delawares listen."

Thus singled, and directly called on, to declare his object, the Huron arose, and advancing with great deliberation and dignity, into the very centre of the circle, where he stood confronted to the prisoners, he placed himself in an attitude to speak. Before opening his mouth, however, he bent his eyes slowly along the whole living boundary of earnest faces, as if to temper his expressions to the capacities of his audience. On Hawk-eye he cast a glance of respectful enmity; on Duncan, a look of inextinguishable hatred; the shrinking figure of Alice, he scarcely deigned to notice; but when his glance met the firm, commanding, and yet lovely form of Cora, his eye lingered a moment, with an expression that it might have been difficult to define. Then, filled with his own dark intentions,

he spoke in the language of the Canadas, a tongue that he well knew was comprehended by most of his auditors.

"The Spirit that made men, coloured them differently," commenced the subtle Huron. "Some are blacker than the sluggish bear. These he said should be slaves; and he ordered them to work for ever, like the beaver. You may hear them groan, when the south wind blows, louder than the lowing buffaloes, along the shores of the great salt water, where the big canoes come and go with them in droves. Some he made with faces paler than the ermine of the forests: and these he ordered to be traders; dogs to their women, and wolves to their slaves. He gave this people the nature of the pigeon; wings that never tire; young, more plentiful than the leaves on the trees, and appetites to devour the earth. He gave them tongues like the false call of the wild-cat; hearts like rabbits; the cunning of the hog, (but none of the fox,) and arms longer than the legs of the moose. With his tongue, he stops the ears of the Indians; his heart teaches him

to pay warriors to fight his battles; his cunning tells him how to get together the goods of the earth; and his arms enclose the land from the shores of the salt water, to the islands of the great lake. His gluttony makes him sick. God gave him enough, and yet he wants all. Such are the pale-faces.

"Some the Great Spirit made with skins brighter and redder than yonder sun," continued Magua, pointing impressively upward to the lurid luminary, which was struggling through the misty atmosphere of the horizon; "and these did he fashion to his own mind. He gave them this island as he had made it, covered with trees, and filled with game. The wind made their clearings; the sun and rain ripened their fruits; and the snows came to tell them to be thankful. What need had they of roads to journey by! They saw through the hills! When the beavers worked, they lay in the shade, and looked on. The winds cooled them in summer; in winter skins kept them warm. If they fought among themselves, it was to prove that

they were men. They were brave; they were just; they were happy."

Here the speaker paused, and again looked around him, to discover if his legend had touched the sympathies of his listeners. He met every where with eyes riveted on his own, heads erect, and nostrils expanded, as though each individual present felt himself able and willing, singly, to redress the wrongs of his race.

"If the Great Spirit gave different tongues to his red children," he continued, in a low still melancholy voice, "it was, that all animals might understand them. Some he placed among the snows, with their cousin the bear. Some he placed near the setting sun, on the road to the happy hunting grounds. Some on the lands around the great fresh waters; but to his greatest and most beloved, he gave the sands of the salt lake. Do my brothers know the name of this favoured people?"

"It was the Lenape!" exclaimed twenty eager voices in a breath.

"It was the Lenni Lenape," returned Magua, affecting to bend his head in re-

verence to their former greatness. "It was the tribes of the Lenape! The sun rose from the water that was salt, and set in water that was sweet, and never hid himself from their eyes. But why should I, a Huron of the woods, tell a wise people their own traditions? Why remind them of their injuries; their ancient greatness; their deeds; their glory; their happiness —their losses; their defeats; their misery? Is there not one among them who has seen it all, and who knows it to be true? I have done. My tongue is still, but my ears are open."

As the voice of the speaker suddenly ceased, every face and all eyes turned, by a common movement, towards the venerable Tamenund. From the moment that he took his seat, until the present instant, the lips of the patriarch had not severed, nor had scarcely a sign of life escaped him. He had sate, bent in feebleness, and apparently unconscious of the presence he was in, during the whole of that opening scene, in which the skill of the scout had been so clearly established. At the nicely

graduated sounds of Magua's voice, however, he had betrayed some evidence of consciousness, and once or twice he had even raised his head as if to listen. But when the crafty Huron spoke of his nation by name, the eye-lids of the old man raised themselves, and he looked out on the multitude, with that sort of dull, unmeaning expression, which might be supposed to belong to the countenance of a spectre. Then he made an effort to rise, and being upheld by his supporters, he gained his feet, in a posture commanding by its dignity, while he tottered with weakness.

"Who calls upon the children of the Lenape!" he said, in a deep, guttural voice, that was rendered awfully audible by the breathless silence of the multitude; "who speaks of things gone! Does not the egg become a worm—the worm a fly—and perish! Why tell the Delawares of good that is past? Better thank the Manitto for that which remains."

"It is a Wyandot," said Magua, stepping nigher to the rude platform on which the other stood; "a friend of Tamenund."

"A friend!" repeated the sage, on whose brow, a dark frown settled, imparting a portion of that severity, which had rendered his eye so terrible in middle age—"Are the Mingoes rulers of the earth! What brings a Huron here?"

"Justice. His prisoners are with his brothers, and he comes for his own."

Tamenund turned his head towards one of his supporters, and listened to the short explanation the man gave. Then facing the applicant, he regarded him a moment with deep attention; after which, he said, in a low and reluctant voice—

"Justice is the law of the Great Manitto. My children, give the stranger food. Then, Huron, take thine own and depart."

On the delivery of this solemn judgment, the patriarch seated himself, and closed his eyes again, as if better pleased with the images of his own ripened experience, than with the visible objects of the world. Against such a decree, there was no Delaware sufficiently hardy to murmur; much less oppose himself. The words were barely uttered, when four or five of the younger warriors

stepping behind Heyward and the scout, passed thongs so dexterously and rapidly around their arms, as to hold them both in instant bondage. The former was too much engrossed with his precious and nearly insensible burthen, to be aware of their intentions before they were executed; and the latter, who considered even the hostile tribes of the Delawares a superior race of beings submitted without resistance. Perhaps, however, the manner of the scout would not have been so passive, had he fully comprehended the language in which the preceding dialogue had been conducted.

Magua cast a look of triumph around the whole assembly, before he proceeded to the execution of his purpose. Perceiving that the men were unable to offer any resistance, he turned his looks on her he valued most. Cora met his gaze with an eye so calm and firm, that his resolution wavered. Then recollecting his former artifice, he raised Alice from the arms of the warrior, against whom she leaned, and beckoning Heyward to follow, he motioned for the en-

circling crowd to open. But Cora, instead of obeying the impulse he had expected, rushed to the feet of the patriarch, and raising her voice exclaimed aloud—

"Just and venerable Delaware, on thy wisdom and power we lean for mercy! Be deaf to yonder artful and remorseless monster, who poisons thy ears with falsehoods, to feed his thirst for blood. Thou, that hast lived long, and that hast seen the evil of the world, should know how to temper its calamities to the miserable."

The eyes of the old man opened heavily, and he once more looked upward at the multitude. As the full piercing tones of the supplicant swelled on his ears, they moved slowly in the direction of her person, and finally settled there, in a steady, riveted gaze. Cora had cast herself to her knees, and with hands clenched in each other and pressed upon her bosom, she remained like a beauteous and breathing model of her sex, looking up in his faded but majestic countenance with a species of holy reverence. Gradually, the expression of Tamenund's features changed, and losing

their vacancy, in admiration, they lighted with a portion of that intelligence, which, a century before, had been wont to communicate his youthful fire to the extensive bands of the Delawares. Rising, without assistance, and, seemingly, without an effort, he demanded, in a voice that startled its auditors by its firmness—

"What art thou!"

"A woman. One of a hated race, if thou wilt—a Yengee. But one who has never harmed thee, and who cannot harm thy people if she would; who asks for succour."

"Tell me, my children," continued the patriarch, hoarsely, motioning to those around him, though his eyes still dwelt upon the kneeling form of Cora, "where have the Delawares camped?"

"In the mountains of the Iroquois; beyond the clear springs of the Horican."

"Many parching summers are come and gone," continued the sage, "since I drank of the waters of my own river. The children of Miquon are the justest white men; but they were thirsty, and they took it to themselves. Do they follow us so far?"

"We follow none; we covet nothing," answered the ardent Cora. "Captives, against our wills, have we been brought amongst you; and we ask but permission to depart to our own, in peace. Art thou not Tamenund—the father—the judge—I had almost said, the prophet—of this people?"

"I am Tamenund, of many days."

"'Tis now some seven years that one of thy people was at the mercy of a white chief, on the borders of this province. He claimed to be of the blood of the good and just Tamenund. 'Go,' said the white man, 'for thy parent's sake, thou art free.' Dost thou remember the name of that English warrior?"

"I remember, that when a laughing boy," returned the patriarch, with the peculiar recollection of vast age, "I stood upon the sands of the sea-shore, and saw a big canoe, with wings whiter than the swan's and wider than many eagles, come from the rising sun—"

"Nay, nay; I speak not of a time so very distant; but of favour shown to thy kindred

by one of mine, within the memory of thy youngest warrior."

"Was it when the Yengeese and the Dutch emanne fought for the hunting grounds of the Delawares? Then Tamenund was a chief, and first laid aside the bow for the lightning of the pale-faces—"

"Nor yet then," interrupted Cora again, "by many ages; I speak of a thing of yesterday. Surely, surely, you forget it not!"

"It was but yesterday," rejoined the aged man, with a touching pathos in his hollow voice, "that the children of the Lenape were masters of the world! The fishes of the salt-lake, the birds, the beasts and the Mengwe of the woods, owned them for Sagamores."

Cora bowed her head in the anguish of disappointment, and, for a bitter moment, struggled with her chagrin. Then elevating her rich features and beaming eyes, she continued, in tones scarcely less penetrating than the unearthly voice of the patriarch himself.

"Tell me, is Tamenund a father?"

The old man looked down upon her,

from his elevated stand, with a benignant smile on his wasted countenance, and then casting his eyes slowly over the whole assemblage, he answered—

"Of a nation."

"For myself I ask nothing. Like thee and thine, venerable chief," she continued, pressing her hands convulsively on her heart, and suffering her head to droop, until her burning cheeks were nearly concealed in the maze of dark, glossy tresses, that fell in disorder upon her shoulders, "the curse of my ancestors has fallen heavily on their child! But yonder is one, who has never known the weight of Heaven's displeasure until now. She is the daughter of an old and failing man, whose days are near their close. She has many, very many, to love her, and delight in her; and she is too good, much too precious, to become the victim of that villain."

"I know that the pale faces are a proud and hungry race. I know that they claim, not only to have the earth, but that the meanest of their colour is better than the Sachems of the red man. The dogs and

crows of their tribes," continued the earnest old chieftain, without heeding the wounded spirit of his listener, whose head was nearly crushed to the earth, in shame, as he proceeded, "would bark and caw, before they would take a woman to their wigwams, whose blood was not of the colour of snow. But let them not boast before the face of the Manitto too loud. They entered the land at the rising, and may yet go off at the setting sun! I have often seen the locusts strip the leaves from the trees, but the season of blossoms has always come again!"

"It is so," said Cora, drawing a long breath, as if reviving from a trance, raising her face, and shaking back her shining veil, with a kindling eye, that contradicted the death-like paleness of her countenance; "but why—it is not permitted us to enquire. There is yet one of thine own people, who has not been brought before thee; before thou lettest the Huron depart in triumph, hear him speak."

Observing Tamenund to look about him doubtingly, one of his companions said—

"It is a snake—a red-skin in the pay of

the Yengeese. We keep him for the torture."

"Let him come," returned the sage.

Then Tamenund once more sunk into his seat, and a silence so deep prevailed, while the young men prepared to obey his simple mandate, that the leaves which fluttered in the draught of the light morning air, were distinctly heard rustling in the surrounding forest.

CHAPTER III.

"If you deny me, fie upon your law!
There is no force in the decrees of Venice:
I stand for judgment: answer; shall I have it?"

Shakspeare.

THE silence continued unbroken by human sounds for many anxious minutes. Then the waving multitude opened, and shut again, and Uncas stood environed by the living circle. All those eyes, which had been curiously studying the lineaments of the sage, as the source of their own intelligence, turned, on the instant, and were now bent in secret admiration on the erect, agile, and faultless person of the captive. But neither the presence in which he found himself, nor the exclusive attention that he attracted, in any manner dis-

turbed the self-possession of the young Mohican. He cast a deliberate and observing look on every side of him, meeting the settled expression of hostility, that lowered in the visages of the chiefs, with the same calmness as the curious gaze of the attentive children. But when, last in his keen and haughty scrutiny, the person of Tamenund came under his glance, his eye became as fixed, as though all other objects were already forgotten. Then, advancing with a slow and noiseless step, up the area, he placed himself immediately before the footstool of the sage. Here he stood unnoted, though keenly observant himself, until one of the chiefs apprised the latter of his presence.

"With what tongue does the prisoner speak to the Manitto?" demanded the patriarch, without unclosing his eyes.

"Like his fathers," Uncas replied; "with the tongue of a Delaware."

At this sudden and unexpected annunciation, a low, fierce yell ran through the multitude, that might not inaptly be compared to the growl of the lion, as his choler

is first awakened—a fearful omen of the weight of his future anger. The effect was equally strong on the sage, though differently exhibited. He passed a hand before his eyes, as if to exclude the least evidence of so shameful a spectacle, while he repeated, in his low and deeply guttural tones, the words he had just heard.

"A Delaware! I have lived to see the tribes of the Lenape driven from their council fires, and scattered like broken herds of deer, among the hills of the Iroquois! I have seen the hatchets of a strange people sweep woods from the valleys, that the winds of Heaven had spared! The beasts that run on the mountains, and the birds that fly above the trees, have I seen living in the wigwams of men; but never before have I found a Delaware so base, as to creep, like a poisonous serpent, into the camps of his nation."

"The singing-birds have opened their bills," returned Uncas, in the softest notes of his own musical voice; "and Tamenund has heard their song."

The sage started, and bent his head

aside, as if to catch the fleeting sounds of some passing melody.

"Does Tamenund dream!" he exclaimed. "What voice is at his ear! Have the winters gone backward! Will summer come again to the children of the Lenape!"

A solemn and respectful silence succeeded this incoherent burst from the lips of the Delaware prophet. His people readily construed his unintelligible language into one of those mysterious conferences, he was believed to hold so frequently, with a superior intelligence, and they awaited the issue of the revelation in secret awe. After a long and patient pause, however, one of the aged men, perceiving that the sage had lost the recollection of the subject before them, ventured to remind him again of the presence of the prisoner.

"The false Delaware trembles lest he should hear the words of Tamenund," he said. "'Tis a hound that howls, when the Yengeese show him a trail."

"And ye," returned Uncas, looking sternly around him, "are dogs that whine

when the Frenchman casts ye the offals of his deer!"

Twenty knives gleamed in the air, and as many warriors sprang to their feet, at this biting, and perhaps merited, retort; but a motion from one of the chiefs suppressed the outbreaking of their tempers, and restored the appearance of quiet. The task might possibly have been more difficult, had not a movement, made by Tamenund, indicated that he was again about to speak.

"Delaware," resumed the sage, "little art thou worthy of thy name. My people have not seen a bright sun in many winters; and the warrior who deserts his tribe, when hid in clouds, is doubly a traitor. The law of the Manitto is just. It is so; while the rivers run and the mountains stand, while the blossoms come and go on the trees, it must be so. He is thine, my children; deal justly by him."

Not a limb was moved, nor was a breath drawn louder and longer than common, until the closing syllable of this final decree had passed the lips of Tamenund. Then a cry of vengeance burst at once, as it

might be, from the united lips of the nation; a frightful augury of their fierce and ruthless intentions. In the midst of these prolonged and savage yells, a chief proclaimed, in a high voice, that the captive was condemned to endure the dreadful trial of torture by fire. The circle broke its order, and screams of delight mingled with the bustle and tumult of instant preparation. Heyward struggled madly with his captors; the anxious eye of Hawk-eye began to look around him, with an expression of peculiar earnestness; and Cora again threw herself at the feet of the patriarch, once more a supplicant for mercy.

Throughout the whole of these trying moments, Uncas had alone preserved his serenity. He looked on the preparations with a steady eye, and when the tormentors came to seize him, he met them with a firm and upright attitude. One among them, if possible, more fierce and savage than his fellows, seized the hunting shirt of the young warrior, and at a single effort, tore it from his body. Then, with a yell of frantic pleasure, he leaped toward his un-

resisting victim, and prepared to lead him to the stake. But, at that moment, when he appeared most a stranger to the feelings of humanity, the purpose of the savage was arrested as suddenly, as if a supernatural agency had interposed in the behalf of Uncas. The eye-balls of the Delaware seemed to start from their sockets; his mouth opened, and his whole form became frozen in an attitude of amazement. Raising his hand, with a slow and regulated motion, he pointed with a finger to the bosom of the captive. His companions crowded about him, in wonder, and every eye was, like his own, fastened intently on the figure of a small tortoise, beautifully tattooed on the breast of the prisoner, in a bright blue tint.

For a singal instant, Uncas enjoyed his triumph, smiling calmly on the scene. Then motioning the crowd away, with a high and haughty sweep of his arm, he advanced in front of the nation with the air of a king, and spoke in a voice louder than the murmur of admiration that ran through the multitude.

"Men of the Lenni Lenape!" he said, "my race upholds the earth! Your feeble tribe stands on my shell! What fire, that a Delaware can light, would burn the child of my fathers," he added, pointing proudly to the simple blazonry on his skin; "the blood that came from such a stock, would smother your flames! My race is the grandfather of nations!"

"Who art thou?" demanded Tamenund, rising, at the startling tones he heard, more than at any meaning conveyed by the language of the prisoner.

"Uncas, the son of Chingachgook," answered the captive, modestly, turning from the nation, and bending his head in reverence to the other's character and years; "a son of the Great Unâmis."*

"The hour of Tamenund is nigh!" exclaimed the sage; "the day is come, at last, to the night! I thank the Manitto, that one is here to fill my place at the council-fire. Uncas, the child of Uncas, is

* Turtle.

found! Let the eyes of a dying eagle gaze on the rising sun."

The youth stepped lightly, but proudly, on the platform, where he became visible to the whole agitated and wondering multitude. Tamenund held him long at the length of his arm, and read every turn in the fine and lofty lineaments of his countenance, with the untiring gaze of one who recalled the days of his own happiness by the examination.

"Is Tamenund a boy!" at length the bewildered prophet exclaimed. "Have I dreamt of so many snows—that my people were scattered like floating sands—of Yengeese, more plenty than the leaves on the trees! The arrow of Tamenund would not frighten the young fawn; his arm is withered like the branch of the dying oak; the snail would be swifter in the race; yet is Uncas before him, as they went to battle, against the pale-faces! Uncas, the panther of his tribe, the eldest son of the Lenape, the wisest Sagamore of the Mohicans! Tell me, ye Delawares, has Tamenund been a sleeper for a hundred winters?"

The calm and deep silence which succeeded these words, sufficiently announced the awful reverence with which his people received the communication of the patriarch. None dared to answer, though all listened in breathless expectation of what might follow. Uncas, however, looking in his face, with the fondness and veneration of a favoured child, presumed on his own high and acknowledged rank, to reply.

"Four warriors of his race have lived and died," he said, "since the friend of Tamenund led his people in battle. The blood of the Turtle has been in many chiefs, but all have gone back into the earth, from whence they came, except Chingachgook and his son."

"It is true—it is true," returned the sage,—a flash of recollection destroying all his pleasing fancies, and restoring him, at once, to a consciousness of the true history of his nation. "Our wise men have often said that two warriors of the 'unchanged' race were in the hills of the Yengeese; why have their seats at the council-fires of the Delawares been so long empty?"

At these words, the young man raised his head, which he had still kept bowed a little, in reverence, and lifting his voice, so as to be heard by the multitude, as if to explain, at once, and for ever, the policy of his family, he said, aloud—

"Once we slept where we could hear the salt lake speak in its anger. Then we were rulers and Sagamores over the land. But when a pale-face was seen on every brook, we followed the deer back to the river of our nation. The Delawares were gone! Few warriors of them all stayed to drink of the stream they loved. Then said my fathers—'here will we hunt. The waters of the river go into the salt lake. If we go towards the setting sun, we shall find streams that run into the great lakes of the sweet water; there would a Mohican die, like fishes of the sea, in the clear springs. When the Manitto is ready, and shall say, 'come,' we will follow the river to the sea, and take our own again.' Such, Delawares, is the belief of the children of the Turtle! Our eyes are on the rising, and not towards the setting sun! We know whence

he comes, but we know not whither he goes. It is enough."

The men of the Lenape listened to his words with all the respect that superstition could lend, finding a secret charm even in the figurative language with which the young Sagamore imparted his ideas. Uncas himself watched the effect of his brief explanation with intelligent eyes, and gradually dropped the air of authority he had assumed, as he perceived that his auditors were content. Then permitting his looks to wander over the silent throng that crowded around the elevated seat of Tamenund, he first perceived Hawk-eye, in his bonds. Stepping eagerly from his stand, he made a way for himself to the side of his friend, and cutting his thongs with a quick and angry stroke of his own knife, he motioned to the crowd to divide. The grave and attentive Indians silently obeyed, and once more they stood ranged in their circle, as before his appearance among them. Uncas then took the scout by the hand, and led him to the feet of the patriarch.

"Father," he said, "look at this pale-face; a just man, and the friend of the Delawares."

"Is he a son of Miquon?"*

"Not so; a warrior known to the Yengeese, and feared by the Maquas."

"What name has he gained by his deeds?"

"We call him Hawk-eye," Uncas replied, using the Delaware phrase; "for his sight never fails. The Mingoes know him better by the death he gives their warriors; with them he is the 'long rifle.'"

"La Longue Carabine!" exclaimed Tamenund, opening his eyes, and regarding the scout, sternly. "My son has not done well to call him friend!"

"I call him so who proves himself such," returned the young chief, with great calmness, but with a steady mien. "If Uncas is welcome among the Delawares, then is Hawk-eye with his friends."

"The pale-face has slain my young men; his name is great for the blows he has struck the Lenape."

* William Penn.

"If a Mingo has whispered that much in the ear of the Delaware, he has only manifested that he is a singing-bird," said the scout, who now believed it was time to vindicate himself from such offensive charges, and who spoke in the tongue of the man he addressed, modifying his Indian figures, however, with his own peculiar notions. "That I have slain the Maquas, I am not the man to deny, even at their own council-fires; but that, knowingly, my hand has ever harmed a Delaware, is opposed to the reason of my gifts, which is friendly to them, and all that belongs to their nation."

A low exclamation of applause passed among the warriors, who exchanged looks with each other, like men that first began to perceive their error.

"Where is the Huron?" demanded Tamenund. "Has he stopped my ears!"

Magua, whose feelings, during that scene in which Uncas had triumphed, may be much better imagined than described, now answered to the call, by stepping boldly in front of the patriarch.

"The just Tamenund," he said, "will not keep what a Huron has lent."

"Tell me, son of my brother," returned the sage, avoiding the dark countenance of le Subtil, and turning gladly to the more ingenuous features of Uncas; "has the stranger a conqueror's right over you?"

"He has none. The panther may get into snares set by the women, but he is strong, and knows how to leap through them."

"La Longue Carabine?"

"Laughs at the Mingoes. Go, Huron; ask your squaws the colour of a bear!"

"The stranger and the white maiden that came into my camp together?"

"Should journey on an open path."

"And the woman that the Huron left with my warriors?"

Uncas made no reply.

"And the woman that the Mingo has brought into my camp?" repeated Tamenund, gravely.

"She is mine!" cried Magua, shaking his hand in triumph at Uncas. "Mohican, you know that she is mine."

"My son is silent," said Tamenund, endeavouring to read the expression of the face that the youth turned from him, in sorrow.

"It is so," was the low and brief reply.

A short and impressive pause succeeded, during which it was very apparent with what reluctance the multitude admitted the justice of the Mingo's claim. At length the sage, on whom alone the decision depended, said, in a firm voice—

"Huron, depart."

"As he came, just Tamenund," demanded the wily Magua; "or with hands filled with the faith of the Delawares? The wigwam of le Renard Subtil is empty. Make him strong with his own."

The aged man mused with himself for a time, and then bending his head towards one of his venerable companions, he asked—

"Are my ears open?"

"It is true."

"Is this Mingo a chief?"

"The first in his nation."

"Girl, what wouldst thou! A great warrior takes thee to wife. Go, thy race will not end."

"Better, a thousand times, it should," exclaimed the horror-struck Cora, "than meet with such a degradation!"

"Huron, her mind is in the tents of her fathers. An unwilling maiden makes an unhappy wigwam."

"She speaks with the tongue of her people," returned Magua, regarding his victim with a look of bitter irony. "She is of a race of traders, and will bargain for a bright look. Let Tamenund speak the words?"

"Take you the wampum, and our love."

"Nothing hence, but what Magua brought hither."

"Then depart with thine own. The Great Manitto forbids that a Delaware should be unjust."

Magua advanced, and seized his captive strongly by the arm; the Delawares fell back, in silence; and Cora, as if conscious that remonstrance would be useless, prepared to submit to her fate without resistance.

"Hold, hold!" cried Duncan, springing forward; "Huron, have mercy! Her ran-

som shall make thee richer than any of thy people were ever yet known to be."

"Magua is a red-skin; he wants not the beads of the pale-faces."

"Gold, silver, powder, lead—all that a warrior needs, shall be in thy wigwam; all that becomes the greatest chief."

"Le Subtil is very strong," cried Magua, violently shaking the hand which grasped the unresisting arm of Cora; "he has his revenge!"

"Mighty Ruler of Providence!" exclaimed Heyward, clasping his hands together in agony, "can this be suffered! To you, just Tamenund, I appeal for mercy."

"The words of the Delaware are said," returned the sage, closing his eyes, and dropping back into his seat, alike wearied with his mental and his bodily exertion. "Men speak not twice."

"That a chief should not misspend his time in unsaying what has once been spoken, is wise and reasonable," said Hawk-eye, motioning to Duncan to be silent; "but

it is also prudent in every warrior to consider well before he strikes his tomahawk into the head of his prisoner. Huron, I love you not; nor can I say that any Mingo has ever received much favour at my hands. It is fair to conclude, that if this war does not soon end, many more of your warriors will meet me in the woods. Put it to your judgment, then, whether you would prefer taking such a prisoner as that lady into your encampment, or one like myself, who am a man that it would greatly rejoice your nation to see with naked hands."

"Will the 'long rifle' give his life for the woman?" demanded Magua, hesitatingly; for he had already made a motion towards quitting the place with his victim.

"No, no; I have not said so much as that," returned Hawk-eye, drawing back, with suitable discretion, when he noted the eagerness with which Magua listened to his proposal. "It would be an unequal exchange, to give a warrior, in the prime of his age and usefulness, for the best woman on the frontiers. I might consent to go in-

to winter quarters, now—at least six weeks afore the leaves will turn—on condition you will release the maiden."

Magua shook his head in cold disdain, and made an impatient sign for the crowd to open.

"Well, then," added the scout, with the musing air of a man who had not half made up his mind, "I will throw 'kill-deer' into the bargain. Take the word of an experienced hunter, the piece has not its equal atween the provinces."

Magua still disdained to reply, continuing his efforts to disperse the crowd.

"Perhaps," added the scout, losing his dissembled coolness, exactly in proportion as the other manifested an indifference to the exchange, "if I should condition to teach your young men the real virtue of the we'pon, it would smooth the little differences in our judgments."

Le Renard fiercely ordered the Delawares, who still lingered in an impenetrable belt around him, in hopes he would listen to the amicable proposal, to open his path,

threatening by the glance of his eye, another appeal to the infallible justice of their "prophet."

"What is ordered, must sooner or later arrive," continued Hawk-eye, turning with a sad and humbled look to Uncas. "The varlet knows his advantage, and will keep it! God bless you, boy; you have found friends among your natural kin, and I hope they will prove as true as some you have met, who had no Indian cross. As for me, sooner or later, I must die; it is therefore fortunate there are but few to make my death-howl! After all, it is likely the imps would have managed to master my scalp, so a day or two will make no great difference in the everlasting reckoning of time. God bless you," added the rugged woodsman, bending his head aside, with quivering muscles, and then instantly changing its direction again, with a wistful look towards the youth; "I loved both you and your father, Uncas, though our skins are not altogether of a colour, and our gifts are somewhat different. Tell the Sagamore

I never lost sight of him in my greatest trouble; and, as for you, think of me sometimes, when on a lucky trail; and depend on it, boy, whether there be one heaven or two, there is a path in the other world, by which honest men may come together again. You'll find the rifle in the place we hid it; take it and keep it for my sake; and harkee, lad, as your natural gifts don't deny you the use of vengeance, use it a little freely on the Mingoes; it may unburthen your grief at my loss, and ease your mind. Huron, I accept your offer; release the lady. I am your prisoner."

A suppressed, but still distinct murmur of approbation, ran through the crowd at this generous proposition; even the fiercest among the Delaware warriors manifesting pleasure at the manliness of the intended sacrifice. Magua paused, and for an anxious moment, it might be said, he doubted; then casting his eyes on Cora, with an expression in which ferocity and admiration were strangely mingled, his purpose became fixed for ever.

He intimated his contempt of the offer, with a backward motion of his head, and said, in a steady and settled voice—

"Le Renard Subtil is a great chief; he has but one mind. Come," he added, laying his hand too familiarly on the shoulder of his captive, to urge her onward; "a Huron warrior is no tattler; we will go."

The maiden drew back in a lofty, womanly reserve, and her dark eye kindled, while the rich blood shot, like the passing brightness of the sun, into her very temples, at the indignity.

"I am your prisoner, and at a fitting time shall be ready to follow, even to my death. But violence is unnecessary," she coldly said; and immediately turning to Hawkeye, added, "generous hunter! from my soul I thank you. Your offer is vain, neither could it be accepted; but still you may serve me, even more than in your own noble intention. Look at that drooping, humble child! Abandon her not until you leave her in the habitations of civilized men. I will not say," wringing the hard hand of

the scout, "that her father will reward you—for such as you are above the rewards of men—but he will thank you, and bless you. And, believe me, the blessing of a just and aged man, has virtue in the sight of Heaven. Would to God, I could hear one from his lips at this awful moment!" Her voice became choked, and for an instant she was silent; then advancing a step nigher, to Duncan, who was supporting her unconscious sister, she continued, in more subdued tones, but in which her feelings, and the habits of her sex, maintained a fearful struggle—"I need not tell you to cherish the treasure you will possess. You love her, Heyward; that would conceal a thousand faults, though she had them. She is as kind, as gentle, as sweet, as good, as mortal may be. There is not a blemish in mind or person, at which the proudest of you all would sicken. She is fair—Oh! how surpassingly fair!" laying her own beautiful, but less brilliant hand, in melancholy affection, on the alabaster forehead of Alice, and parting the golden hair which

clustered about her brows; "and yet her soul is as pure and spotless as her skin! I could say much—more, perhaps, than cooler reason would approve; but I will spare both you and myself—" Her voice became inaudible, and her face was bent over the form of her sister. After a long and burning kiss, she arose, and with features of the hue of death, but without even a tear in her feverish eye, she turned away, and added to the savage, with all her former elevation of manner—"Now, sir, if it be your pleasure, I will follow."

"Ay, go," cried Duncan, placing Alice in the arms of an Indian girl; "go, Magua, go. These Delawares have their laws, which forbid them to detain you; but I—I have no such obligation. Go, malignant monster—why do you delay!"

It would be difficult to describe the expression of features with which Magua listened to this threat to follow. There was at first a fierce and manifest display of joy, and then it was instantly subdued in a look of cunning coldness.

"The woods are open," he was content with answering; "the 'open hand' can follow."

"Hold," cried Hawk-eye, seizing Duncan by the arm, and detaining him by violence; "you know not the craft of the imp. He would lead you to an ambushment, and your death—"

"Huron," interrupted Uncas, who submissive to the stern customs of his people, had been an attentive and grave listener to all that passed; "Huron, the justice of the Delawares comes from the Manitto. Look at the sun. He is now in the upper branches of the hemlock. Your path is short and open. When he is seen above the trees there will be men on your trail."

"I hear a crow!" exclaimed Magua, with a taunting laugh. "Go," he added, shaking his hand at the crowd, which had slowly opened to admit his passage—"Where are the petticoats of the Delawares! Let them send their arrows and their guns to the Wyandots; they shall have vension to eat, and corn to hoe. Dogs, rabbits, thieves—I spit on you!"

His parting gibes were listened to in a dead, boding silence; and with these biting words in his mouth, the triumphant Magua passed unmolested into the forest, followed by his passive captive, and protected by the inviolable laws of Indian hospitality.

CHAPTER IX.

"*Flue.* Kill the poys and the luggage! 'tis expressly against the law of arms; 'tis as arrant a piece of knavery, mark you now, as can be offered in the 'orld." *King Henry V.*

So long as their enemy and his victim continued in sight, the multitude remained motionless, as being charmed to the place by some power that was friendly to the Huron; but the instant he disappeared, it became tossed and agitated by fierce and powerful passion. Uncas maintained his elevated stand, keeping his eyes on the form of Cora, until the colours of her dress were blended with the foliage of the forest; when he descended, and moving silently through the throng, he disappeared in that lodge, from which he had so recently issued. A few of the graver and more attentive

warriors, who caught the gleams of anger that shot from the eyes of the young chief, in passing, followed him to the place he had selected for his meditations. After which, Tamenund and Alice were removed, and the women and children were ordered to disperse. During the momentous hour that succeeded, the encampment resembled a hive of troubled bees, who only awaited the appearance and example of their leader, to take some distant and momentous flight.

A young warrior, at length, issued from the lodge of Uncas, and moving deliberately with a sort of grave march, towards a dwarf pine, that grew in the crevices of the rocky terrace, he tore the bark from its body, and then returned whence he came, without speaking. He was soon followed by another, who stripped the sapling of its branches, leaving it a naked and "blazed" trunk. A third coloured the posts with stripes of a dark red paint; all which indications of a hostile design in the leaders of the nation, were received by the men without in a gloomy and ominous silence. Finally, the Mohican himself re-

appeared, divested of all his attire, except his girdle and leggings, and with one half of his fine features hid under a cloud of threatening black.

Uncas moved with a slow and dignified tread towards the post, which he immediately commenced encircling with a measured step, not unlike an ancient dance, raising his voice, at the same time, in the wild and irregular chant of his war-song. The notes were in the extremes of human sounds; being sometimes melancholy and exquisitely plaintive, even rivalling the melody of birds—and then, by sudden and startling transitions, causing the auditors to tremble by their depth and energy. The words were few, and often repeated, proceeding gradually from a sort of invocation, or hymn, to the deity, to an intimation of the warrior's object, and terminating as they commenced, with an acknowledgment of his own dependence on the Great Spirit. If it were possible to translate the comprehensive and melodious language in which he spoke, the ode might read something like the following—

Manitto! Manitto! Manitto!
Thou art great—thou art good—thou art wise—
Manitto! Manitto!
Thou art just!

In the heavens, in the clouds, Oh! I see!
Many spots—many dark—many red—
In the heavens, Oh! I see!
Many clouds.

In the woods, in the air, Oh! I hear!
The whoop, the long yell, and the cry—
In the woods, Oh! I hear
The loud whoop!

Manitto! Manitto! Manitto!
I am weak—thou art strong—I am slow—
Manitto! Manitto!
Give me aid.

At the end of what might be called each verse, he made a pause, by raising a note louder and longer than common, that was peculiarly suited to the sentiment just expressed. The first close was solemn, and intended to convey the idea of veneration; the second descriptive, bordering on the alarming; and the third was the well-known and terrific war-whoop, which burst from the lips of the young warrior, like a com-

bination of all the frightful sounds of battle. The last was like the first, humble, meek, and imploring. Three times did he repeat this song, and as often did he encircle the post in his dance.

At the close of the first turn, a grave and highly esteemed chief of the Lenape followed his example, singing words of his own, however, to a music of a similar character. Warrior after warrior enlisted in the dance, until all of any renown and authority were to be numbered in its mazes. The spectacle now became wildly terrific; the fierce looking and menacing visages of the chiefs receiving additional power, from the appalling strains in which they mingled their guttural tones. Just then, Uncas struck his tomahawk deep into the post, and raised his voice in a shout, which might be termed his own battle cry. The act announced that he had assumed the chief authority in the intended expedition.

It was a signal that awakened all the slumbering passions of the nation. A hundred youths, who had hitherto been re-

strained by the diffidence of their years, rushed in a frantic body on the fancied emblem of their enemy, and severed it asunder, splinter by splinter, until nothing remained of the trunk but its roots in the earth. During this moment of tumult, the most ruthless deeds of war were performed on the fragments of the tree, with as much apparent ferocity, as though they were the actual living victims of their cruelty. Some were scalped; some received the keen and trembling axe; and others suffered by thrusts from the fatal knife. In short, the manifestations of zeal and fierce delight were so great and unequivocal, that it was soon apparent the expedition was unqualifiedly declared to be a war of the nation.

The instant Uncas had struck the blow, he moved out of the circle, and cast his eyes up at the sun, which was just gaining the point, when the truce with Magua was to end. The fact was soon announced by a significant gesture, accompanied by a corresponding cry, and the whole of the excited multitude abandoned their mimic warfare,

with shrill and loud yells of pleasure, to prepare for the more hazardous experiment of the reality.

The whole face of the encampment was now instantly changed. The warriors, who were already armed, and painted, became as still, as if they were incapable of any uncommon burst of emotion. On the other hand, the women broke out of the lodges, with the songs of joy and those of lamentation, so strangely mingled, that it might have been difficult to have said which passion preponderated. None, however, were idle. Some bore their choicest articles, others their young, and some their aged and infirm, into the forest, which spread itself like a verdant carpet of bright green against the side of the mountain. Thither Tamenund also retired, with calm composure, after a short and touching interview with Uncas; from whom the sage separated with the reluctance that a parent would quit a long lost, and just recovered, child. In the mean time, Duncan saw Alice to a place of safety, and then sought the scout, with features that

denoted how eagerly he also panted for the approaching contest.

But Hawk-eye was too much accustomed to the war-song and the enlistments of the natives, to betray any interest in the passing scene. He merely cast an occasional look at the number and quality of the warriors, who, from time to time, signified their readiness to accompany Uncas to the field. In this particular he was soon satisfied; for, as has been already seen, the power of the young chief quickly embraced every fighting man in the nation. After this material point was so satisfactorily decided, he dispatched an Indian boy, in quest of "kill-deer" and the rifle of Uncas, to the place, in the margin of the forest, where they had deposited the weapons, on approaching the camp of the Delawares—a measure of double policy, inasmuch as it protected the arms from their own fate, if detained as prisoners, and gave them the advantage of appearing among the strangers rather as sufferers, than as men provided with the means of defence and subsistence. In selecting another to perform the office of

reclaiming his highly prized rifle, the scout had lost sight of none of his habitual caution. He knew that Magua had not come unattended, and he also knew that Huron spies watched the movements of their new enemies, along the whole boundary of the woods. It would, therefore, have been fatal to himself to have attempted the experiment; a warrior would have fared no better; but the danger of a boy would not be likely to commence until after his object was discovered. When Heyward joined him, the scout was coolly awaiting the result of this experiment.

The boy, who had been well instructed, and was sufficiently crafty, proceeded, with a bosom that was swelling with the pride of such a confidence, and all the hopes of young ambition, carelessly across the clearing to the wood, which he entered at a point at some little distance from the place where the guns were secreted. The instant, however, he was concealed by the foliage of the bushes, his dusky form was to be seen gliding, like that of a serpent, towards the desired treasure. He was successful;

and in another moment he appeared, flying across the narrow opening that skirted the base of the terrace on which the village stood, with the velocity of an arrow, and bearing one of his prizes in each hand. He had actually gained the crags, and was leaping up their sides with incredible activity, when a shot from the woods showed how accurate had been the judgment of the scout. The boy answered it with a feeble, but contemptuous shout, and immediately a second bullet was sent after him, from another part of the cover. At the next instant he appeared on the level above, elevating his guns in triumph, while he moved, with the air of a conqueror, towards the renowned hunter, who had honoured him by so glorious a commission.

Notwithstanding the lively interest Hawk-eye had taken in the fate of his messenger, he received "kill-deer" with a satisfaction that, momentarily, drove all other recollections from his mind. After examining the piece with a keen and intelligent eye, and opening and shutting the pan some ten or fifteen times, and trying sundry other

equally important experiments on the lock, he turned to the boy, and demanded, with great manifestations of kindness, if he was hurt. The urchin looked proudly up in his face, but made no reply.

"Ay! I see, lad, the knaves have barked your arm!" added the scout, taking up the limb of the patient sufferer, across which a deep flesh wound had been made by one of the bullets; "but a little bruised alder will act like a charm. In the mean time, I will wrap it in a badge of wampum! You have commenced the business of a warrior early, my brave boy, and are likely to bear aplenty of honourable scars to your grave. I know many young men that have taken scalps, who cannot show such a mark as this! Go;" having bound up the arm; "you will be a chief!"

The lad departed, prouder of his flowing blood than the vainest courtier could be of his blushing riband; and stalked among the fellows of his age, an object of general admiration and envy. But in a moment of so many serious and important duties, this single act of juvenile fortitude, did not

attract the general notice and commendation it would have received under milder auspices. It had, however, served to apprise the Delawares of the position and the intentions of their enemies. Accordingly, a party of adventurers, better suited to the task than the weak, though spirited boy, were ordered to dislodge the skulkers. The duty was soon performed, for most of the Hurons retired of themselves, when they found that they had been discovered. The Delawares followed to a sufficient distance from their own encampment, and then halted for orders, apprehensive of being led into an ambush. As both parties secreted themselves, the woods were again as still and quiet, as a mild summer morning and deep solitude could render them.

The calm, but still impatient Uncas, now collected his chiefs, and divided his power. He presented Hawk-eye as a warrior, often tried, and always found deserving of confidence. When he found his friend met with a favourable reception, he bestowed on him the command of twenty men, like himself, active, skilful, and resolute. He

gave the Delawares to understand the rank of Heyward among the troops of the Yengeese, and then tendered to him a trust of equal authority. But Duncan declined the charge, professing his readiness to serve as a volunteer by the side of the scout. After this disposition, the young Mohican appointed various native chiefs to fill the different situations of responsibility, and the time now pressing, he gave forth the word to march. He was cheerfully, but silently obeyed, by more than two hundred men.

Their entrance into the forest was perfectly unmolested; nor did they encounter any living objects, that could either give the alarm, or furnish the intelligence they needed, until they came upon the lairs of their own scouts. A halt was then ordered, and the chiefs were assembled in front to hold a "whispering council." At this meeting, divers plans of operation were suggested, though none of a character to meet the wishes of their ardent leader. Had Uncas followed the promptings of his own inclinations, he would have led his followers to the charge without a moment's

delay, and put the conflict to the hazard of an instant issue; but such a course would have been in opposition to all the received practices and opinions of his countrymen, He was, therefore, fain to adopt a caution, that in the present temper of his mind, he execrated, and to listen to advice at which his fiery spirit chafed, under the vivid recollection of Cora's danger, and Magua's insolence.

After an unsatisfactory conference of many minutes, a solitary individual was seen advancing from the side of the enemy, with such apparent haste, as to induce the belief he might be a messenger charged with some pacific overtures. When within a hundred yards, however, of the cover, behind which the Delaware council had assembled, the stranger hesitated, appeared uncertain what course to take, and finally halted. All eyes were now turned on Uncas, as if seeking directions how to proceed.

"Hawk-eye," said the young chief, in a low voice, "he must never speak to the Hurons again."

"His time has come," said the laconic scout, thrusting the long barrel of his rifle through the leaves, and taking his deliberate and fatal aim. But, instead of pulling the trigger, he lowered the muzzle again, and indulged himself in a fit of his peculiar mirth. "I took the imp for a Mingo, as I'm a miserable sinner!" he said; "but when my eye ranged along his ribs, for a place to get the bullet in—would you think it, Uncas—I saw the musicianer's blower! and so, after all, it is the man they call Gamut, whose death can profit no one, and whose life, if his tongue can do any thing but sing, may be made serviceable to our own ends. If sounds have not lost their virtue, I'll soon have a discourse with the honest fellow, and that in a voice he'll find more agreeable than the speech of 'kill-deer.'"

So saying, Hawk-eye laid aside his rifle, and crawling through the bushes, until within hearing of David, he attempted to repeat the musical effort, which had conducted himself, with so much safety and eclat, through the Huron encampment.

The exquisite organs of Gamut could not readily be deceived, (and, to say the truth, it would have been difficult for any other than Hawk-eye to produce a similar noise,) and, consequently, having once before heard the sounds, he now knew whence they proceeded. The poor fellow appeared instantly relieved from a state of great embarrassment; for, immediately pursuing the direction of the voice—a task that to him was not much less arduous, than it would have been to have gone up in face of a battery, he soon discovered the hidden songster, who produced such melodious strains.

"I wonder what the Hurons will think of that!" said the scout, laughing, as he took his companion by the arm, and urged him swiftly towards the rear. "If the knaves lie within ear-shot, they will say there are two non-compossurs, instead of one! But here we are safe," he added, pointing to Uncas and his associates. "Now give us the history of the Mingo inventions, in natural English, and without any ups-and-downs of voice."

David gazed about him, at the fierce and

wild looking chiefs, in mute wonder; but assured by the presence of faces that he knew, he soon rallied his faculties so far, as to make an intelligent reply.

"The heathen are abroad in goodly numbers," said David; "and, as I fear with evil intent. There has been much howling and ungodly revelry, together with such sounds as it is profanity to utter, in their habitations within the past hour; so much so, in truth, that I have fled to the Delawares in search of peace."

"Your ears might not have profited much by the exchange, had you been quicker of foot," returned the scout, a little drily. "But let that be as it may; where are the Hurons?"

"They lie hid in the forest, between this spot and their village, in such force, that prudence would teach you instantly to return."

Uncas cast a proud glance along the range of trees which concealed his own band, and then mentioned the name of—

"Magua?"—

"Is among them. He brought in the

maiden that had sojourned with the Delawares, and leaving her in the cave, has put himself, like a raging wolf, at the head of his savages. I know not what has troubled his spirit so greatly!"

"He has left her, you say, in the cave!" interrupted Heyward; "'tis well that we know its situation! May not something be done for her instant relief?"

Uncas looked earnestly at the scout, before he asked—

"What says Hawk-eye?"

"Give me my twenty rifles, and I will turn to the right, along the stream, and passing by the huts of the beaver, will join the Sagamore and the Colonel. You shall then hear the whoop from that quarter; with this wind one may easily send it a mile. Then Uncas do you drive in their front; when they come within range of our pieces, we will give them a blow, that I pledge the good name of an old frontiersman shall make their line bend, like an ashen bow. After which, we will carry their village, and take the woman from the cave; when the affair may be finished with

the tribe, according to a white man's battle, by a blow and a victory; or, in the Indian fashion, with dodge and cover. There may be no great learning, major, in this plan, but with courage and patience it can all be done."

"I like it much," cried Duncan, who saw that the release of Cora was the primary object in the mind of the scout; "I like it much. Let it then be instantly attempted."

After a short conference, the plan was matured, and rendered more intelligible to the several parties; the different signals were appointed, and the chiefs separated, each to his allotted station.

CHAPTER X.

> "But plagues shall spread, and funeral fires increase,
> Till the great king, without a ransom paid,
> To her own Chryse, send the black-eyed maid."—*Pope.*

During the time Uncas was making this disposition of his forces, the woods were as still, and, with the exception of those who had met in council, apparently, as much untenanted, as when they came fresh from the hands of their Almighty Creator. The eye could range, in every direction, through the long and shadowed vistas of the trees; but no where was any object to be seen, that did not properly belong to the peaceful, and slumbering scenery. Here and there a bird was heard fluttering among the branches of the beeches, and occasionally a squirrel dropped a nut, drawing the startled looks of the party, for

a moment, to the place; but the instant the casual interruption ceased, the passing air was heard murmuring above their heads, along that verdant and undulating surface of the forest, which spread itself unbroken, unless by stream or lake, over such a vast region of country. Across the tract of wilderness, which lay between the Delawares and the village of their enemies, it seemed as if the foot of man had never trodden, so breathing and deep was the silence in which it lay. But Hawk-eye, whose duty now led him foremost in the adventure, knew the character of those with whom he was about to contend, too well, to trust the treacherous quiet.

When he saw his little band again collected, the scout threw "kill-deer" into the hollow of his arm, and making a silent signal that he would be followed, he led them many rods towards the rear, into the bed of a little brook, which they had crossed in advancing. Here he halted, and after waiting for the whole of his grave and attentive warriors to close about him, he spoke in Delaware, demanding—

"Do any of my young men know whither this run will lead us?"

A Delaware stretched forth a hand, with the two fingers separated, and indicating the manner in which they were joined at the root, he answered—

"Before the sun could go his own length, the little water will be in the big." Then he added, pointing in the direction of the place he mentioned, "the two make enough for the beavers."

"I thought as much," returned the scout, glancing his eye upward at the opening in the tree-tops, "from the course it takes, and the bearings of the mountains. Men, we will keep within the cover of its banks till we scent the Hurons."

His companions gave the usual brief exclamation of assent, but perceiving that their leader was about to lead the way, in person, one or two made signs that all was not as it should be. Hawk-eye, who comprehended their meaning glances, turned, and perceived that his party had been followed thus far by the singing-master.

"Do you know, friend," asked the scout,

gravely, and perhaps with a little of the pride of conscious deserving in his manner, "that this is a band of rangers, chosen for the most desperate service, and put under the command of one, who, though another might say it with a better face, will not be apt to leave them idle. It may not be five, it cannot be thirty, minutes before we tread on the body of a Huron, living or dead."

"Though not admonished of your intentions in words," returned David, whose face was a little flushed, and whose ordinarily quiet and unmeaning eyes glimmered with an expression of unusal fire, "your men have reminded me of the children of Jacob going out to battle against the Shechemites, for wickedly aspiring to wedlock with a woman of a race that was favoured of the Lord. Now, I have journeyed far, and sojourned much, in good and evil, with the maiden ye seek; and, though not a man of war, with my loins girded and my sword sharpened, yet would I gladly strike a blow in her behalf."

The scout hesitated, as if weighing the

chances of such a strange enlistment in his mind, before he answered—

"You know not the use of any we'pon. You carry no rifle; and believe me, what the Mingoes take, they will freely give again."

"Though not a vaunting and bloodily disposed Goliah," returned David, drawing a sling from beneath his parti-coloured and uncouth attire, "I have not forgotten the example of the Jewish boy. With this ancient instrument of war have I practised much in my youth, and peradventure the skill has not entirely departed from me."

"Ay!" said Hawk-eye, considering the deer-skin thong and apron, with a cold and discouraging eye; "the thing might do its work among arrows, or even knives; but these Mengwe have been furnished by the Frenchers with a good grooved barrel a man. However, it seems to be your gift to go unharmed amid a fire; and as you have hitherto been favoured——Major, you have left your rifle at a cock; a single shot before the time, would be just twenty scalps lost to no purpose—Singer, you can follow; we may find use for you in the shoutings."

"I thank you, friend," returned David, supplying himself, like his royal namesake, from among the pebbles of the brook, "though not given to the desire to kill, had you sent me away, my spirit would have been troubled."

"Remember," added the scout, tapping his own head significantly on that spot where Gamut was yet sore, "we come to fight, and not to musickate. Until the general whoop is given, nothing speaks but the rifle."

David nodded, as much as to signify his acquiescence with the terms, and then Hawk-eye, casting another observant glance over his followers, made the signal to proceed.

Their route lay, for the distance of a mile, along the bed of the water course. Though protected from any great danger of observation by the precipitous banks, and the thick shrubberry which skirted the stream, for the whole distance, no precaution, known to an Indian attack, was neglected. A warrior rather crawled than

walked on each flank, so as to catch occasional glimpses into the forest; and every few minutes the band came to a halt, and listened for hostile sounds, with an acuteness of organs, that would be scarcely conceivable to a man in a less natural state. Their march was, however, unmolested, and they reached the point where the lesser stream was lost in the greater, without the smallest evidence that their progress had been noted. Here the scout again halted, to consult the signs of the forest.

"We are likely to have a good day for a fight," he said, in English, addressing Heyward, and glancing his eye upwards at the clouds, which began to move in broad sheets across the firmament; "a bright sun and a glittering barrel are no friends to true sight. Every thing is favourable; they have the wind, which will bring down their noises and their smoke too, no little matter in itself; whereas, with us, it will be first a shot and then a clear view. But here is an end of our cover; the beavers have had the range of this stream for hundreds of years,

and what atween their food and their dams, there is, as you see, many a girdled stub, but few living trees."

Hawk-eye had, in truth, in these few words, given no bad description of the prospect that now lay in their front. The brook was irregular in its width, sometimes shooting through narrow fissures in the rocks, and at others, spreading over acres of bottom land, forming little areas, that might be termed ponds. Every where along its banks were the mouldering relics of dead trees, in all the stages of decay, from those that groaned on their tottering trunks, to such as had recently been robbed of those rugged coats, that so mysteriously contain their principle of life. A few long, low, and moss covered piles, were scattered among them, like the memorials of a former and long departed generation.

All these minute particulars were now noted by the scout, with a gravity and interest, that they probably had never before attracted. He knew that the Huron encampment lay a short half mile up the brook, and, with the characteristic anxiety

of one who dreaded a hidden danger, he was greatly troubled at not finding the smallest trace of the presence of his enemy. Once or twice he felt induced to give the order for a rush, and to attempt the village by surprise; but his experience quickly admonished him of the danger of so useless an experiment. Then he listened intently, and with painful uncertainty, for the sounds of hostility in the quarter where Uncas was left; but nothing was audible except the sighing of the wind, that began to sweep over the bosom of the forest in gusts, which threatened a tempest. At length, yielding rather to his unusual impatience, than taking counsel from his knowledge, he determined to bring matters to an issue, by unmasking his force, and proceeding cautiously, but steadily, up the stream.

The scout had stood, while making his observations, sheltered by a brake, and his companions still lay in the bed of the ravine, through which the smaller stream debouched; but on hearing his low, though intelligible signal, the whole party stole up the bank, like so many dark spectres, and

silently arranged themselves around him. Pointing in the direction he wished to proceed, Hawk-eye advanced, the band breaking off in single files, and following so accurately in his footsteps, as to leave, if we except Heyward and David, the trail of but a single man.

The party was, however, scarcely uncovered, before a volley from a dozen rifles was heard in their rear, and a Delaware leaping high into the air, like a wounded deer, fell at his whole length, perfectly dead.

"Ah! I feared some deviltry like this!" exclaimed the scout in English; adding, with the quickness of thought, in his adopted tongue, "to cover men, and charge!"

The band dispersed at the word, and before Heyward had well recovered from his surprise, he found himself standing alone with David. Luckily, the Hurons had already fallen back, and he was safe from their fire. But this state of things was evidently to be of short continuance, for the scout set the example of pressing on their retreat, by discharging his rifle,

and darting from tree to tree, as his enemy slowly yielded ground.

It would seem that the assault had been made by a very small party of the Hurons, which, however, continued to increase in numbers, as it retired on its friends, until the return fire was very nearly, if not quite equal, to that maintained by the advancing Delawares. Heyward threw himself among the combatants, and imitating the necessary caution of his companions, he supported quick discharges with his own rifle. The contest now grew warm and stationary. Few were injured, as both parties kept their bodies as much protected as possible by the trees; never, indeed, exposing any part of their persons, except in the act of taking aim. But the chances were gradually growing unfavourable to Hawk-eye and his band. The quick sighted scout perceived all his danger, without knowing how to remedy it. He saw it was more dangerous to retreat than to maintain his ground; while he found his enemy throwing out men on his flank, which rendered the task of keeping themselves covered so very diffi-

ficult to the Delawares, as nearly to silence their fire. At this embarrassing moment, when they began to think the whole of the hostile tribe was gradually encircling them, to their destruction, they heard the yell of combatants, and the rattling of arms, echoing under the arches of the wood, at the place where Uncas was posted; a bottom which, in a manner, lay beneath the ground on which Hawk-eye and his party were contending.

The effects of this attack were instantaneous, and to the scout and his friends greatly relieving. It would seem, that while his own surprise had been anticipated, and had consequently failed, the enemy in their turn having been deceived in its object and in his numbers, had left too small a force to resist the impetuous onset of the young Mohican. This fact was doubly apparent, by the rapid manner in which the battle in the forest rolled upward towards the village, and by an instant falling off in the number of their assailants, who rushed to assist in maintaining their

front, and, as it now proved to be, their principal point of defence.

Animating his followers by his voice, and his own example, Hawk-eye then gave the word to bear down upon their foes.

The charge, in that rude species of warfare, consisted merely in pushing from cover to cover, nigher to the enemy; and in this manœuvre he was instantly and successfully obeyed. The Hurons were compelled to withdraw, and the scene of the contest rapidly changed from the more open ground on which it had commenced, to a spot where the assailed found a thicket to rest upon. Here the struggle was protracted, arduous, and seemingly of doubtful issue. The Delawares, though none of them fell, beginning to bleed freely, in consequence of the disadvantage at which they were held.

In this crisis, Hawk-eye found means to get behind the same tree, as that which served for a cover to Heyward; most of his own combatants being within call, a little on his right, where they maintained

rapid, though fruitless, discharges on their sheltered enemies.

"You are a young man, major," said the scout, dropping the butt of 'kill-deer' to the earth, and leaning on the barrel, a little fatigued with his previous industry; "and it may be your gift to lead armies, at some future day, ag'in these imps, the Mingoes. You may here see the philosophy of an Indian fight. It consists, mainly, in a ready hand, a quick eye, and a good cover. Now, if you had a company of the Royal Americans here, in what manner would you set them to work in this business?"

"The bayonet would make a road."

"Ay, there is white reason in what you say; but a man must ask himself, in this wilderness, how many lives he can spare. No—horse," continued the scout, shaking his head, like one who mused; "horse, I am ashamed to say, must sooner or later, decide these skrimmages. The brutes are better than men, and to horse must we come at last! Put a shodden hoof on the mocassin of a red-skin, and if his rifle be

once emptied, he will never stop to load it again."

"This is a subject that might better be discussed another time," returned Heyward; "shall we charge?"

"I see no contradiction to the gifts of any man, in passing his breathing spells in useful reflections," the scout mildly replied. "As to a rush, I little relish such a measure, for a scalp or two must be thrown away in the attempt. And yet," he added, bending his head aside, to catch the sounds of the distant combat, "if we are to be of use to Uncas, these knaves in our front must be now gotten rid of!"

Then turning, with a prompt and decided air, from Duncan, he called aloud to his Indians, in their own language. His words were answered by a shout, and at a given signal, each warrior made a swift movement around his particular tree. The sight of so many dark bodies, glancing before their eyes at the same instant, drew a hasty, and, consequently, an ineffectual fire from the Hurons. Then, without stop-

ping to breathe, the Delawares leaped, in long bounds, towards the wood, like so many panthers springing upon their prey. Hawk-eye was in front, brandishing his terrible rifle, and animating his followers by his example. A few of the older and more cunning Hurons, who had not been deceived by the artifice which had been practised to draw their fire, now made a close and deadly discharge of their pieces, and justified the apprehensions of the scout, by felling three of his foremost warriors. But the shock was insufficient to repel the impetus of the charge. The Delawares broke into the cover, with the ferocity of their natures, and swept away every trace of resistance by the fury of the onset.

The combat endured only for an instant, hand to hand, and then the assailed yielded ground rapidly, until they reached the opposite margin of the thicket, where they clung to their cover, with the sort of obstinacy that is so often witnessed in hunted brutes. At this critical moment, when the success of the struggle was again becoming doubtful, the crack of a rifle was heard

behind the Hurons, and a bullet came whizzing from among some beaver lodges, which were situated in the clearing, in their rear, and was followed by the fierce and appalling yell of the war-whoop.

"There speaks the Sagamore!" shouted Hawk-eye, answering the cry with his own stentorian voice; "we have them now in face and back!"

The effect on the Hurons was instantaneous. Discouraged by so unexpected an assault, from a quarter that left them no opportunity for cover, their warriors uttered a common yell of disappointment and despair, and breaking off in a body, they spread themselves across the opening, heedless of every other consideration but flight. Many fell, in making the experiment, under the bullets and the blows of the pursuing Delawares.

We shall not pause to detail the meeting between the scout and Chingachgook, or the more touching interview that Duncan held with the anxious father of his mistress. A few brief and hurried words served to explain the state of things to both parties;

and then Hawk-eye, pointing out the Sagamore to his band, resigned the chief authority into the hands of the Mohican chief. Chingachgook assumed the station to which his birth and experience gave him so distinguished a claim, with the grave dignity that always gives force to the mandates of a native warrior. Following the footsteps of the scout, he led the party back through the thicket, his men scalping the fallen Hurons, and secreting the bodies of their own dead as they proceeded, until they gained a point where the former was content to make a halt.

The warriors who had breathed themselves so freely in the preceding struggle, were now posted on a bit of level ground, sprinkled with trees, in sufficient numbers to conceal them. The land fell off rather precipitously in front, and beneath their eyes stretched for several miles, a narrow, dark and wooded vale. It was through this dense and dark forest, that Uncas was still contending with the main body of the Hurons.

The Mohican and his friends advanced

to the brow of the hill, and listened, with practised ears, to the sounds of the combat. A few birds hovered over the leafy bosom of the valley, as if frightened from their secluded nests, and here and there a light vapoury cloud, which seemed already blending with the atmosphere, arose above the trees, and indicated some spot where the struggle had been more fierce and stationary than usual.

"The fight is coming up the ascent," said Duncan, pointing in the direction of a new explosion of fire-arms; "we are too much in the centre of their line to be effective."

"They will incline into the hollow, where the cover is thicker," said the scout, "and that will leave us well on their flank. Go, Sagamore; you will hardly be in time to give the whoop, and lead on the young men. I will fight this skrimmage with warriors of my own colour! You know me, Mohican; not a Huron of them all shall cross the swell, into your rear, without the notice of 'kill-deer.'"

The Indian chief paused another moment to consider the signs of the contest, which

was now rolling rapidly up the ascent, a certain evidence that the Delawares triumphed; nor did he actually quit the place, until admonished of the proximity of his friends, as well as enemies, by the bullets of the former, which began to patter among the dried leaves on the ground, like the bits of falling hail which precede the bursting of the tempest. Hawk-eye and his three companions withdrew a few paces to a sheltered spot, and awaited the issue with that sort of calmness that nothing but great practice could impart, in such a scene.

It was not long before the reports of the rifles began to lose the echoes of the woods, and to sound like weapons discharged in the open air. Then a warrior appeared, here and there, driven to the skirts of the forest, and rallying as he entered the clearing, as at the place where the final stand was to be made. These were soon joined by others, until a long line of swarthy figures was to be seen clinging to the cover, with the obstinacy of desperation. Heyward began to grow impatient, and turned his eyes anxiously in the direction of Chin-

gachgook. The chief was seated on a rock, with nothing visible but his calm visage, considering the spectacle with an eye as deliberate, as if he were posted there merely to view the struggle.

"The time is come for the Delaware to strike!" said Duncan.

"Not so, not so," returned the scout; "when he scents his friends, he will let them know that he is here. See, see; the knaves are getting in that clump of pines, like bees settling after their flight. By the Lord, a squaw might put a bullet in such a knot of dark-skins!"

At that instant the whoop was given, and a dozen Hurons fell by a discharge from Chingachgook and his band. The shout that followed, was answered by a single war-cry from the forest, and then a yell passed through the air, that sounded as though a thousand throats were united in a common effort. The Hurons staggered, deserting the centre of their line, and Uncas issued, through the opening they left, from the forest, at the head of a hundred warriors.

Waving his hands right and left, the young chief pointed out the enemy to his followers, who instantly separated in the pursuit. The war now divided, both wings of the broken Hurons seeking protection in the woods again, hotly pressed by the victorious warriors of the Lenape. A minute might have passed, but the sounds were already receding in different directions, and gradually losing their distinctness beneath the echoing arches of the woods. One little knot of Hurons, however, had disdained to seek a cover, and were retiring, like lions at bay, slowly and sullenly up the acclivity, which Chingachgook and his band had just deserted to mingle more closely, in the fray. Magua was conspicuous in this party, both by his fierce and savage mien, and by the air of haughty authority he yet maintained.

In his eagerness to expedite the pursuit, Uncas had left himself nearly alone; but the moment his eye caught the figure of le Subtil, every other consideration was forgotten. Raising his cry of battle, which recalled some six or seven warriors, and

reckless of the disparity in their numbers, he rushed upon his enemy. Le Renard, who watched the movement, paused to receive him with secret joy. But at the moment when he thought the rashness of his impetuous young assailant had left him at his mercy, another shout was given, and la Longue Carabine was seen rushing to the rescue, attended by all his white associates. The Huron instantly turned, and commenced a rapid retreat up the ascent.

There was no time for greetings or congratulations; for Uncas, though unconscious of the presence of his friends, continued the pursuit with the velocity of the wind. In vain Hawk-eye called to him to respect the covers; the young Mohican braved the dangerous fire of his enemies, and soon compelled them to a flight as swift as his own headlong speed. It was fortunate that the race was of short continuance, and that the white men were much favoured both in the distance and the ground, by their position, or the Delaware would soon have outstripped all his companions, and fallen a victim to his own temerity. But ere such a calamity could

happen, the pursuers and pursued entered the Wyandot village, within striking distance of each other.

Excited by the presence of their dwellings, and tired of the chase, the Hurons now made a stand, and fought around their council lodge with the desperation of despair. The onset and the issue were like the passage and destruction of a whirlwind. The tomahawk of Uncas, the blows of Hawk-eye, and, even, the still nervous arm of Munro, were all busy for that passing moment, and the ground was quickly strewed with their enemies. Still Magua, though daring and much exposed, escaped from every effort against his life, with that sort of fabled protection, that was made to overlook the fortunes of favoured heroes in the legends of ancient poetry. Raising a yell that spoke volumes of anger and disappointment, the subtile chief, when he saw his comrades fallen, darted away from the place, attended by his two only surviving friends, leaving the Delawares engaged in stripping the dead of the bloody trophies of their victory.

But Uncas, who had vainly sought him in the mêlé, bounded forward in pursuit; Hawk-eye, Heyward, and David, still pressing on his footsteps. The utmost that the scout could effect, was to keep the muzzle of his rifle a little in advance of his friend, to whom, however, it answered every purpose, of a charmed shield. Once Magua appeared disposed to make another and a final effort to revenge his losses; but abandoning his intentions so soon as demonstrated, he leaped into a thicket of bushes, through which he was followed by his enemies, and suddenly entered the mouth of the cave already known to the reader. Hawk-eye, who had only forborne to fire in tenderness to Uncas, raised a shout of success, and proclaimed aloud, that now they were certain of their game. The pursuers dashed into the long and narrow entrance, in time to catch a glimpse of the retreating forms of the Hurons. Their passage through the natural galleries and subterraneous apartments of the cavern was preceded by the shrieks and cries of hundreds of women and children. The

place, seen by its dim and uncertain light, appeared like the shades of the infernal regions, across which unhappy ghosts and savage demons were flitting in multitudes.

Still Uncas kept his eye on Magua, as if life to him possessed but a single object. Heyward and the scout still pressed on his rear, actuated, though, possibly, in a less degree, by a common feeling. But their way was becoming intricate, in those dark and gloomy passages, and the glimpses of the retiring warriors less distinct and frequent; and for a moment the trace was believed to be lost, when a white robe was seen fluttering in the farther extremity of a passage that seemed to lead up the mountain.

"'Tis Cora!" exclaimed Heyward, in a voice in which horror and delight were wildly mingled.

"Cora! Cora!" echoed Uncas, bounding forward like a deer.

"'Tis the maiden!" shouted the scout. "Courage, lady; we come—we come."

The chase was renewed with a diligence rendered tenfold encouraging, by this

glimpse of the captive. But the way was now rugged, broken, and, in spots, nearly impassable. Uncas abandoned his rifle, and leaped forward with headlong precipitation. Heyward rashly imitated his example, though both were, a moment afterwards, admonished of its madness, by hearing the bellowing of a piece, that the Hurons found time to discharge down the passage in the rocks, the bullet from which even gave the young Mohican a slight wound.

"We must close!" said the scout, passing his friends by a desperate leap; "the knaves will pick us all off at this distance; and see; they hold the maiden so as to shield themselves!"

Though his words were unheeded, or rather unheard, his example was followed by his companions, who, by incredible exertions, got near enough to the fugitives to perceive that Cora was borne along between the two warriors, while Magua prescribed the direction and manner of their flight. At this moment, the forms of all four were strongly drawn against an opening in the sky, and then they disappeared. Nearly

frantic with disappointment, Uncas and Heyward increased efforts that already seemed superhuman, and they issued from the cavern on the side of the mountain, in time to note the route of the pursued. The course lay up the ascent, and still continued hazardous and laborious.

Encumbered by his rifle, and, perhaps not sustained by so deep an interest in the captive as his companions, the scout suffered the latter to precede him a little; Uncas, in his turn, taking the lead of Heyward. In this manner, rocks, precipices, and difficulties, were surmounted, in an incredibly short space, that at another time and under other circumstances, would have been deemed almost insuperable. But the impetuous young men were rewarded, by finding, that, encumbered with Cora, the Hurons were rapidly losing ground in the race.

"Stay; dog of the Wyandots!" exclaimed Uncas, shaking his bright tomahawk at Magua; "a Delaware girl calls stay!"

"I will go no farther," cried Cora, stop-

ping unexpectedly on a ledge of rocks, that overhung a deep precipice, at no great distance from the summit of the mountain. "Kill me if thou wilt, detestable Huron, I will go no farther!"

The supporters of the maiden raised their ready tomahawks with the impious joy that fiends are thought to take in mischief, but Magua suddenly stayed their uplifted arms. The Huron chief, after casting the weapons he had wrested from his companions over the rock, drew his knife, and turned to his captive, with a look in which conflicting passions fiercely contended.

"Woman," he said, "choose; the wigwam or the knife of le Subtil!"

Cora regarded him not; but dropping on her knees, with a rich glow suffusing itself over her features, she raised her eyes and stretched her arms towards heaven, saying, in a meek and yet confiding voice—

"I am thine! do with me as thou seest best!"

"Woman," repeated Magua, hoarsely, and endeavouring in vain to catch a glance from her serene and beaming eye, "choose."

But Cora neither heard nor heeded his demand. The form of the Huron trembled in every fibre, and he raised his arm on high, but dropped it again, with a wild and bewildered air, like one who doubted. Once more he struggled with himself, and lifted the keen weapon again—but just then a piercing cry was heard above them, and Uncas appeared, leaping frantically, from a fearful height, upon the ledge. Magua recoiled a step, and one of his assistants, profiting by the chance, sheathed his own knife in the bosom of the maiden.

The Huron sprang like a tiger on his offending and already retreating countryman, but the falling form of Uncas separated the unnatural combatants. Diverted from his object by this interruption, and maddened by the murder he had just witnessed, Magua buried his weapon in the back of the prostrate Delaware, uttering an unearthly shout, as he committed the dastardly deed. But Uncas arose from the blow, as the wounded panther turns upon his foe, and struck the murderer of Cora to his feet, by an effort, in which the last of

his failing strength was expended. Then, with a stern and steady look, he turned to le Subtil, and indicated by the expression of his eye, all that he would do, had not the power deserted him. The latter seized the nerveless arm of the unresisting Delaware, and passed his knife into his bosom three several times, before his victim, still keeping his gaze rivetted on his enemy with a look of inextinguishable scorn, fell dead at his feet.

"Mercy! mercy! Huron," cried Heyward, from above, in tones nearly choaked by horror; "give mercy, and thou shalt receive it!"

Whirling the bloody knife up at the imploring youth, the victorious Magua uttered a cry, so fierce, so wild, and yet so joyous, that it conveyed the sounds of savage triumph to the ears of those who fought in the valley, a thousand feet below. He was answered by an appalling burst from the lips of the scout, whose tall person was just then seen moving swiftly towards him, along those dangerous crags, with steps as bold and reckless, as if he possessed

the power to move in middle air. But when the hunter reached the scene of the ruthless massacre, the ledge was tenanted only by the dead.

His keen eye took a single look at the victims, and then shot its fierce glances over the difficulties of the ascent in his front. A form stood at the brow of the mountain, on the very edge of the giddy height, with uplifted arms, in an awful attitude of menace. Without stopping to consider his person, the rifle of Hawk-eye was raised, but a rock which fell on the head of one of the fugitives below, exposed the indignant and glowing countenance of the honest Gamut. Then Magua issued from a crevice, and stepping with calm indifference over the body of the last of his associates, he leaped a wide fissure, and ascended the rocks at a point where the arm of David could not reach him. A single bound would carry him to the brow of the precipice, and assure his safety. Before taking the leap, however, the Huron paused, and shaking his hand at the scout, he shouted—

"The pale-faces are dogs! the Delawares

women! Magua leaves them on the rocks, for the crows!"

Laughing hoarsely, he made a desperate leap, and fell short of his mark; though his hands grasped a shrub on the verge of the height. The form of Hawk-eye had crouched like a beast about to take its spring, and his frame trembled so violently with eagerness, that the muzzle of the half raised rifle played like a leaf fluttering in the wind. Without exhausting himself with fruitless efforts, the cunning Magua suffered his body to drop to the length of his arms, and found a fragment for his feet to rest upon. Then summoning all his powers, he renewed the attempt, and so far succeeded, as to draw his knees on the edge of the mountain. It was now, when the body of his enemy was most collected together, that the agitated weapon of the scout was drawn to his shoulders. The surrounding rocks, themselves, were not steadier than the piece became for the single instant that it poured out its contents. The arms of the Huron relaxed, and his body fell back a little, while his knees still kept

their position. Turning a relentless look on his enemy, he shook his hand at him, in grim defiance. But his hold loosened, and his dark person was seen cutting the air with its head downwards, for a fleeting instant, until it glided past the fringe of shrubbery which clung to the mountain, in its rapid flight to destruction.

CHAPTER XI.

"They fought—like brave men, long and well,
They piled that ground with Moslem slain,
They conquered—but Bozzaris fell,
Bleeding at every vein.
His few surviving comrades saw
His smiles when rang their proud hurrah,
And the red field was won;
Then saw in death his eyelids close
Calmly, as to a night's repose,
Like flowers at set of sun."—*Halleck.*

The sun found the Lenape, on the succeeding day, a nation of mourners. The sounds of battle were over, and they had fed fat their ancient grudge, and had avenged their recent quarrel with the Mengwe, by the destruction of a community. The black and murky atmosphere that floated aroupd the spot where the Hurons had encamped, sufficiently announced, of itself, the fate of that wandering tribe; while hundreds of ravens, that struggled above the bleak summits of the moun-

tains, or swept, in noisy flocks, across the wide ranges of the woods, furnished a frightful direction to the scene of the fatal combat. In short, any eye, at all practised in the signs of a frontier warfare, might easily have traced all those unerring evidences of the ruthless results which attend an Indian vengeance.

Still, the sun rose on the Lenape, a nation of mourners. No shouts of success, no songs of triumph, were heard, in rejoicings for their victory. The latest straggler had returned from his fell employment, only to strip himself of the terrific emblems of his bloody calling, and to join in the lamentations of his countrymen, as a stricken people. Pride and exultation were supplanted by humility, and the fiercest of human passions was already succeeded by the most profound and unequivocal demonstrations of grief.

The lodges were deserted; but a broad belt of earnest faces encircled a spot in their vicinity, whither every thing possessing life had repaired, and where all were now collected, in a deep and awful silence.

Though beings of every rank and age, of both sexes, and of all pursuits, had united to form this breathing wall of bodies, they were influenced by a single emotion. Each eye was rivetted on the centre of that ring, which contained the objects of so much, and of so common, an interest.

Six Delaware girls, with their long, dark, flowing, tresses, falling loosely across their bosoms, stood apart, and only gave proofs of their existence, as they occasionally strewed sweet scented herbs and forest flowers on a litter of fragrant plants, that, under a pall of Indian robes, supported all that now remained of the ardent, high souled, and generous Cora. Her form was concealed in many wrappers of the same simple manufacture, and her face was shut for ever from the gaze of human eyes. At her feat was seated the desolate Munro. His aged head was bowed nearly to the earth, in compelled submission to the stroke of Providence; but there was a hidden anguish that struggled about his furrowed brow, that was only partially concealed by the careless locks of gray that had fallen,

neglected, on his temples. Gamut stood at his side, with his meek head bared to the rays of the sun, while his eyes, wandering and concerned, seemed to be equally divided between that little volume, which contained so many quaint but holy maxims, and the being, in whose behalf his soul yearned to administer their consolation. Heyward was also nigh, supporting himself against a tree, and endeavouring to keep down those sudden risings of sorrow, that it required his utmost manhood to subdue.

But sad and melancholy as this groupe may easily be imagined, it was far less touching than another, that occupied the opposite space of the same area. Seated, as in life, with his form and limbs arranged in grave and decent composure, Uncas appeared, arrayed in the most gorgeous ornaments that the wealth of the tribe could furnish. Rich plumes nodded above his head; wampum, gorgets, bracelets, and medals, adorned his person in profusion; though his dull eye, and vacant lineaments, too strongly contradicted the idle tale of pride they would convey.

Directly in front of the corpse, Chingachgook was placed, without arms, paint, or adornment of any sort, except the bright blue blazonry of his race, that was indelibly impressed on his naked bosom. During the long period that the tribe had been thus collected, the Mohican warrior had kept a steady anxious look on the cold and senseless countenance of his son. So rivetted and intense had been that gaze, and so changeless his attitude, that a stranger might not have told the living from the dead, but for the occasional gleamings of a troubled spirit, that shot athwart the dark visage of one, and the death-like calm that had for ever settled on the lineaments of the other.

The scout was hard by, leaning, in a pensive posture, on his own fatal and avenging weapon; while Tamenund, supported by the elders of his nation, occupied a high place at hand, whence he might look down on the mute and sorrowful assemblage of his people.

Just within the inner edge of the circle, stood a soldier, in the military attire of a

strange nation; and without it, was his war-horse, in the centre of a collection of mounted domestics, seemingly in readiness to undertake some distant journey. The vestments of the stranger announced him to be one who held a responsible situation near the person of the Captain of the Canadas; and who, as it would now seem, finding his errand of peace frustrated by the fierce impetuosity of his allies, was content to become a silent and sad spectator of the fruits of a contest, that he had arrived too late to anticipate.

The day was drawing to the close of its first quarter, and yet had the multitude maintained its breathing stillness, since the appearance of early dawn. No sound louder than a stifled sob had been heard among them, nor had even a limb been moved throughout that long and painful period, except to perform the simple and touching offerings that were made, from time to time, in commemoration of the sweetness of the maiden. The patience and forbearance of Indian fortitude, could alone support such an appearance of ab-

straction, as seemed now to have turned each dark and motionless figure into some rigid being carved in stone.

At length the sage of the Delawares stretched forth an arm, and leaning on the shoulders of his attendants, he arose with an air as feeble, as if another age had already intervened between the man who had met his nation the preceding day, and him who now tottered on his elevated stand.

"Men of the Lenape!" he said in hollow tones, that sounded like a voice charged with some prophetic mission; "the face of the Manitto is behind a cloud! his eye is turned from you; his ears are shut; his tongue gives no answer. You see him not; yet his judgments are before you. Let your hearts be open, and your spirits tell no lie. Men of the Lenape, the face of the Manitto is behind a cloud!"

As this simple and yet terrible annunciation stole on the ears of the multitude, a stillness as deep and awful succeeded, as if the venerated spirit they worshipped had uttered the words, without the aid of human

organs; and even the inanimate Uncas appeared a being of life, compared with the humbled and submissive throng by whom he was now surrounded. As the immediate effect, however, gradually passed away, a low murmur of voices commenced a sort of chant in honour of the dead. The sounds were those of females, and were thrillingly soft and wailing. The words were connected by no regular continuation, but as one ceased, another took up the eulogy, or lamentation, which ever it might be called, and gave vent to her emotions, in such language as was suggested by her feelings and the occasion. At intervals, the speaker was interrupted by general and loud bursts of sorrow, during which the girls round the bier of Cora plucked the plants and flowers, blindly, from her body, as if bewildered with grief. But in the milder moments of their plaint, these emblems of purity and sweetness were cast back to their places, with every sign of tenderness and regret. Though rendered less connected by many and

general interruptions and outbreakings, a translation of their language would have contained a regular descant, which, in substance, might have proved to possess a train of consecutive ideas.

A girl, selected for the task by her rank and qualifications, commenced by modest allusions to the qualities of the deceased warrior, embellishing her expressions with those oriental images, that the Indians have probably brought with them from the extremes of the other continent, and which form, of themselves, a link to connect the ancient histories of the two worlds. She called him the "panther of his tribe;" and described him as one whose moccasin left no trail on the dews; whose bound was like the leap of the young fawn; whose eye was brighter than a star in the dark night; and whose voice, in battle, was loud as the thunder of the Manitto. She reminded him of the mother who bore him, and dwelt forcibly on the happiness she must feel in possessing such a son. She bade him tell her, when they met in

the world of spirits, that the Delaware girls had shed tears above the grave of her child, and had called her blessed.

Then, they who succeeded, changing their tones to a milder and still more tender strain, alluded, with the peculiar delicacy and sensitiveness of women, to the stranger maiden, who had left the upper earth at a time so near his own departure as to render the will of the Great Spirit too manifest to be disregarded. They admonished him to be kind to her, and to have consideration for her ignorance of those arts, which were so necessary to the comfort of a warrior like himself. They dwelt upon her matchless beauty, and on her noble resolution, without the taint of envy, and as angels may be thought to delight in a superior excellence; adding that these endowments should prove more than an equivalent for any little imperfections in her education.

After which, others again, in due succession, spoke to the maiden herself, in the low, soft language of tenderness and love. They exhorted her to be of cheerful mind,

and to fear nothing for her future welfare. A hunter would be her companion, who knew how to provide for her smallest wants; and a warrior was at her side, who was able to protect her against every danger. They promised that her path should be pleasant, and her burthen light. They cautioned her against unavailing regrets for the friends of her youth, and the scenes where her fathers had dwelt; assuring her that the "blessed hunting grounds of the Lenape" contained vales as pleasant, streams as pure, and flowers as sweet, as the "Heaven of the pale-faces." They advised her to be attentive to the wants of her companion, and never to forget the distinction which the Manitto had so wisely established between them. Then, in a wild burst of their chant, they sung, with united voices, the temper of the Mohican's mind. They pronounced him noble, manly and generous; all that became a warrior, and all that a maid might love. Clothing their ideas in the most remote and subtle images, they betrayed, that, in the short period of their intercourse, they

had discovered, with the intuitive perception of their sex, the truant disposition of his inclinations. The Delaware girls had found no favour in his eyes! He was of a race that had once been lords on the shores of the salt lake, and his wishes had led him back to a people who dwelt about the graves of his fathers. Why should not such a predilection be encouraged! That she was of a blood purer and richer than the rest of her nation, any eye might have seen. That she was equal to the dangers and daring of a life in the woods, her conduct had proved; and, now, they added, the "wise one of the earth" had transplanted her to a place where she would find congenial spirits, and might be for ever happy.

Then, with another transition in voice and subject, allusions were made to the virgin who wept in the adjacent lodge. They compared her to flakes of snow; as pure, as white, as brilliant, and as liable to melt in the fierce heats of summer, or congeal in the frosts of winter. They doubted not that she was lovely in the eyes of the young chief, whose skin and

whose sorrow seemed so like her own; but, though far from expressing such a preference, it was evident they deemed her less excellent than the maid they mourned. Still they denied her no meed, her rare charms might properly claim. Her ringlets were compared to the exuberant tendrils of the vine, her eye to the blue vault of the heavens, and the most spotless cloud, with its glowing flush of the sun, was admitted to be less attractive than her bloom.

During these and similar songs, nothing was audible but the murmurs of the music; relieved, as it was, or rather rendered terrible, by those occasional bursts of grief, which might be called its chorusses. The Delawares themselves listened like charmed men; and it was very apparent, by the variations of their speaking countenances, how deep and true was their sympathy. Even David was not reluctant to lend his ears to the tones of voices so sweet; and long ere the chant was ended, his eager and attentive gaze announced that his soul was entirely enthralled.

The scout, to whom alone, of all the

white men, the words were intelligible, suffered himself to be a little aroused from his meditative posture, and bent his face aside, to catch, their meaning, as the girls proceeded. But when they spoke of the future prospects of Cora and Uncas, he shook his head, like one who knew the error of their simple creed, and resuming his reclining attitude, he maintained it until the ceremony—if that might be called a ceremony, in which feeling was so deeply imbued—was finished. Happily for the self-command of both Heyward and Munro, they knew not the meaning of the wild sounds they heard.

Chingachgook was a solitary exception to the interest manifested by the native part of the audience. His look never changed throughout the whole of the scene, nor did a muscle move in his dark and rigid countenance, even at the wildest or most pathetic parts of the lamentation. The cold and senseless remains of his son was all to him, and every other sense but that of sight seemed frozen, in order that his eyes might take their final gaze at those

lineaments he had so long loved, and which were now about to be closed for ever from his view.

In this stage of the funeral obsequies, a warrior much renowned for his deeds in arms, and more especially for his services in the recent combat, a man of stern and grave demeanour, advanced slowly from the crowd, and placed himself nigh the person of the dead.

"Why hast thou left us, pride of the Wapanachki!" he said, addressing himself to the dull ears of Uncas, as though the empty clay still retained the faculties of the animated man; "thy time has been like that of the sun when in the trees; thy glory brighter than his light at noon-day. Thou art gone, youthful warrior, but a hundred Wyandots are clearing the briars from thy path to the world of spirits. Who that saw thee in battle, would believe that thou couldst die! Who before thee hast ever shown Uttawa the way into the fight. Thy feet were like the wings of eagles; thine arm heavier than falling branches from the pine; and thy voice

like the Manitto, when he speaks in the clouds. The tongue of Uttawa is weak," he added, looking about him with a melancholy gaze, "and his heart exceeding heavy. Pride of the Wapanachki, why hast thou left us!"

He was succeeded by others, in due order, until most of the high and gifted men of the nation had sung or spoken their tribute of praise over the manes of the deceased chieftain. When each had ended, another deep and breathing silence reigned in all the place.

Then a low, deep sound was heard, like the suppressed accompaniment of distant music, rising just high enough on the air to be audible, and yet so indistinctly, as to leave its character, and the place whence it proceeded, alike matters of conjecture. It was, however, succeeded by another and another strain, each in a higher key, until they grew on the ear, first in long drawn and often repeated interjections, and finally in words. The lips of Chingachgook had so far parted, as to announce that it was the monody of the father which was now

about to be uttered. Though not an eye was turned towards him, nor the smallest sign of impatience exhibited, it was apparent, by the manner in which the multitude elevated their heads to listen, that they drunk in the sounds with an intenseness of attention, that none but Tamenund himself had ever before commanded. But they listened in vain. The strains rose just so loud, as to become intelligible, and then grew fainter and more trembling, until they finally sunk on the ear, as if borne away by a passing breath of wind. The lips of the Sagamore closed, and he remained silent in his seat, looking, with his rivetted eye and motionless form, like some creature that had been turned from the Almighty hand with the form, but without the spirit of a man. The Delawares, who knew, by these symptoms, that the mind of their friend was not prepared for so mighty an effort of fortitude, relaxed in their attention, and, with innate delicacy, seemed to bestow all their thoughts on the obsequies of the stranger maiden.

A signal was given, by one of the elder

chiefs, to the women, who crowded that part of the circle near which the body of Cora lay. Obedient to the sign, the girls raised the bier to the elevation of their heads, and advanced with slow and regulated steps, chanting, as they proceeded, another soft, low, and wailing song, in praise of the deceased. Gamut, who had been a close observer of rites he deemed so heathenish, now bent his head over the shoulder of the unconscious father, whispering—

"They move with the remains of thy child; shall we not follow, and see them interred with Christian burial?"

Munro started, as though the last trumpet had sounded its blast in his ear, and bestowing one anxious and hurried glance around him, he arose and followed in the simple train, with the mien of a soldier, but bearing the full burthen of a parent's suffering. His friends pressed around him with a sorrow that was too strong to be termed sympathy—even the young Frenchman joining in the procession, with the air of a man who was sensibly touched at the

early and melancholy fate of one so lovely. But when the last and humblest female of the tribe had joined in the wild, and yet ordered, array, the men of the Lenape contracted their circle, and formed, again, around the person of Uncas, as silent, as grave, and as motionless, as before.

The place which had been chosen for the grave of Cora, was a little knoll, where a cluster of young and healthful pines had taken root, forming, of themselves, a melancholy and appropriate shade over the spot. On reaching it, the girls deposited their burthen, and continued, for many minutes, waiting, with characteristic patience, and native timidity, for some evidence, that they whose feelings were most concerned, were content with the arrangement. At length, the scout, who alone understood their habits, said, in their own language—

"My daughters have done well; the white men thank them."

Satisfied with this testimony in their favour, the girls proceeded to deposit the body in a shell, ingeniously, and not inele-

gantly, fabricated of the bark of the birch; after which, they lowered it into its dark and final abode. The ceremony of covering the remains, and concealing the marks of the fresh earth, by leaves and other natural and customary objects, was conducted with the same simple and silent forms. But, when the labours of the kind beings, who had performed these sad and friendly offices, were so far completed, they hesitated, in a way to show, that they knew not how much farther they might proceed. It was in this stage of the rites, that the scout again addressed them—

"My young women have done enough," he said; "the spirit of a pale-face has no need of food or raiment—their gifts being according to the heaven of their colour. I see," he added, glancing an eye at David, who was preparing his book in a manner that indicated an intention to lead the way in sacred song, "that one who better knows the Christian fashions is about to speak."

The females stood modestly aside, and, from having been the principal actors in the scene, they now became the meek and

attentive observers of that which followed. During the time David was occupied in pouring out the pious feelings of his spirit in this manner, not a sign of surprise, nor a look of impatience, escaped them. They listened as though they knew the meaning of the strange words, and appeared as if they felt the mingled emotions of sorrow, hope, and resignation, they were intended to convey.

Excited by the scene he had just witnessed, and perhaps influenced by his own secret emotions, the master of song exceeded all his usual efforts. His full, rich voice, was not found to suffer by a comparison with the soft tones of the girls; and his more modulated strains possessed, at least for the ears of those to whom they were peculiarly addressed, the additional power of intelligence. He ended the anthem, as he had commenced it, in the midst of a grave and solemn stillness.

When, however, the closing cadence had fallen on the ears of his auditors, the secret, timorous glances of the eyes, and the general, and yet subdued movement of

the assemblage, betrayed, that something was expected from the father of the deceased. Munro seemed sensible that the time was come for him to exert what is, perhaps, the greatest effort of which human nature is capable. He bared his gray locks, and looked around the timid and quiet throng, by which he was encircled, with a firm and collected countenance. Then motioning with his hand for the scout to listen, he said—

"Say to these kind and gentle females, that a heart-broken and failing man, returns them his thanks. Tell them, that the Being we all worship, under different names, will be mindful of their charity; and that the time shall not be distant, when we may assemble around his throne, without distinction of sex, or rank, or colour!"

The scout listened to the tremulous voice in which the veteran delivered these words, and shook his head, slowly, when they were ended, as one who doubted of their efficacy.

"To tell them this," he said, "would be to tell them that the snows come not in

the winter, or that the sun shines fiercest when the trees are stripped of their leaves!"

Then turning to the women, he made such a communication of the other's gratitude, as he deemed most suited to the capacities of his listeners. The head of Munro had already sunken upon his chest, and he was again fast relapsing into his brooding melancholy, when the young Frenchman before named, ventured to touch him lightly on the elbow. As soon as he had gained the attention of the mourning old man, he pointed towards a groupe of young Indians, who approached with a light, but closely covered litter, and then pointed upward, impressively, towards the sun.

"I understand you, sir," returned Munro, with a voice of forced firmness; "I understand you. It is the will of Heaven, and I submit. Cora, my child! if the prayers of a heart-broken father could avail thee now, how blessed shouldst thou be! Come, gentlemen," he added, looking about him with an air of lofty composure, though the anguish that quivered in his faded counte-

nance was far too powerful to be entirely concealed; "our duty here is ended; let us depart."

Heyward gladly obeyed a summons that took them from a spot, where, each instant, he felt his self-controul was about to desert him. While his companions were mounting, however, he found time to press the hand of the scout, and to repeat the terms of an engagement they had made, to meet again, within the posts of the British army. Then gladly throwing himself into the saddle, he spurred his charger to the side of the litter, whence low and stifled sobs alone announced the presence of Alice. In this manner, the head of Munro again dropping on his bosom, with Heyward and David following in sorrowing silence, and attended by the Aide of Montcalm, with his guard, all the white men, with the exception of Hawk-eye, passed from before the eyes of the Delawares, and were soon buried in the vast forests of that region.

But the tie which, through their common calamity, had united the feelings of thes

simple dwellers in the woods with the strangers who had thus transiently visited them, was not so easily broken. Years passed away before the traditionary tale of the white maiden, and of the young warrior of the Mohicans, ceased to beguile the long nights and tedious marches of their weariness, or to animate their youthful and brave with a desire for vengeance against their natural enemies. Neither were the secondary actors in all these momentous incidents immediately forgotten. Through the medium of the scout, who served for years afterwards as a link between them and civilized life, they learned, in answer to their inquiries, that the "gray-head" was speedily gathered to his fathers: borne down, as was erroneously believed, by his military misfortunes; and that the "open hand" had conveyed his surviving daughter far into the settlements of the "pale faces," where her tears had, at last, ceased to flow, and had been succeeded by the bright smiles which were better suited to her happy and joyous nature.

But these were events of a time later than that which concerns our tale. Deserted by all of his colour, Hawk-eye returned to the spot where his own sympathies led him, with a force that no ideal bond of union could bestow. He was just in time to catch a parting look of the features of Uncas, whom the Delawares were already enclosing in his last vestments of skins. They paused to permit the longing and lingering gaze of the sturdy woodsman, and when it was ended, the body was enveloped never to be unclosed again. Then came a procession like the other, and the whole nation was collected about the temporary grave of the chief—temporary, because it was proper, that, at some future day, his bones should rest among those of his own people.

The movement, like the feeling, had been simultaneous and general. The same grave expression of grief, the same rigid silence, and the same deference to the principal mourner, were observed, around the place of interment, as have been already de-

scribed, The body was deposited in an attitude of repose, facing the rising sun, with the implements of war, and of the chase at hand, in readiness for the final journey. An opening was left in the shell, by which it was protected from the soil, for the spirit to communicate with its earthly tenement, when necessary; and the whole was concealed from the instinct, and protected from the ravages of the beasts of prey, with an ingenuity peculiar to the natives. The manual rites then ceased, and all present reverted to the more spiritual part of the ceremonies.

Chingachgook became, once more, the object of the common attention. He had not yet spoken, and something consolatory and instructive was expected from so renowned a chief, on an occasion of such general interest. Conscious of the wishes of the people, the stern and self-restrained warrior raised his face, which had latterly been buried in his robe, and looked about him, with a steady eye. His firmly compressed and expressive lips then severed, and

for the first time during the long ceremonies, his voice was heard, distinctly audible.

"Why do my brothers mourn!" he said, regarding the dark race of dejected warriors, by whom he was environed; "why do my daughters weep! that a young man has gone to the happy hunting grounds; that a chief has filled his time with honour. He was good. He was dutiful. He was brave. Who can deny it? The Manitto had need of such a warrior, and he has called him away. As for me, the son and the father of Uncas, I am a 'blazed pine in a clearing of the pale-faces.' My race has gone from the shores of the salt lake, and the hills of the Delawares. But who can say that the serpent of his tribe has forgotten his wisdom! I am alone—"

"No, no," cried Hawk-eye, who had been gazing with a yearning look at the rigid features of his friend, with something like his own self-command, but whose philosophy could endure no longer; "no, Sagamore, not alone. The gifts of our colour may be different, but God has so

placed us as to journey in the same path. I have no kin, and I may also say, like you, no people. He was your son, and a red-skin by nature; and it may be, that your blood was nearer—but if ever I forget the lad, who has so often fou't at my side in war, and slept at my side in peace, may He who made us all, whatever may be our colour or our gifts, forget me. The boy has left us for a time, but, Sagamore, you are not alone!"

Chingachgook grasped the hands that, in the warmth of his feeling, the scout had stretched across the fresh earth, and in that attitude of friendship, these two sturdy and intrepid woodsmen bowed their heads together, while scalding tears fell to their feet, watering the grave of Uncas, like drops of fallen rain.

In the midst of the awful stillness with which such a burst of feeling, coming, as it did, from the two most renowned warriors of that region, was received, Tamenund lifted his voice, to disperse the multitude.

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